DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 220 805 CS 006 794

AUTHOR Mason, Jana; Osborn, Jean
TITLE When Do Children Begin "Reading to Learn"? A Survey of Classroom Reading Instruction Practices in Grades Two through Five. Technical Report No. 261.
INSTITUTION Bolt, Beranek and Newman, Inc., Cambridge, Mass.; Illinois Univ., Urbana. Center for the Study of Reading.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Sep 82
CONTRACT 400-76-0116
NOTE 84p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Beginning Reading; Classroom Observation Techniques; Classroom Techniques; Comparative Analysis; Elementary Education; Grouping (Instructional Purposes); Intermediate Grades; Primary Education; *Reading Comprehension; *Reading Instruction; Reading Material Selection; *Reading Research; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teaching Methods; *Word Recognition

ABSTRACT

A commonly held belief about reading instruction in the elementary grades is that students must first learn to read so that they will then utilize their reading skill to learn from written language and to acquire new ideas. Consequently most of the instructional time in the primary grades is spent in teaching students how to recognize words and read fluently, whereas in the intermediate grades there is an instructional shift toward more diversified reading texts with an emphasis on learning how to understand, interpret, and evaluate new concepts. To investigate the questions of whether teachers believe there is an instructional shift and whether any direct evidence supports an actual shift toward comprehension instruction at about the fourth grade, a questionnaire was designed for second through fifth grade teachers that sampled their views about reading instruction. Additional data were obtained through observations of third and fourth grade teachers. Both the questionnaire and the observations focused on how classrooms were managed, how students were grouped for instruction, how reading materials were selected, and how reading tasks varied in quality and quantity. Questionnaire results indicated changes over grade in procedure and method of organization of the classroom. They also show that while teachers believe that word-level instruction should be replaced by text-level comprehension instruction in the upper grades, there is little actual change in emphasis. Observations reveal a small decrease over grade in word recognition instruction but no increase in text level comprehension. Consequently, reading instruction does not conform to teachers' beliefs or to expectations of teacher educators. (HOD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED220805

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF READING

Technical Report No. 261

WHEN DO CHILDREN BEGIN "READING TO LEARN"?: A SURVEY OF CLASSROOM READING INSTRUCTION PRACTICES IN GRADES TWO THROUGH FIVE

Jana Mason and Jean Osborn
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

September 1982

University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, Illinois 61820

Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.
50 Moulton Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02238

C S0067 9K

The research reported herein was supported in part by the National Institute of Education under Contract No, US-NIE-C-400-76-0116. Technical assistance was provided by Joan Boggs, Peter Freebody, Robert Schwartz and Larry Shirey.

EDITORIAL BOARD

William Nagy and Stephen Wilhite
Co-Editors

Harry Blanchard
Charlotte Blomeyer
Nancy Bryant
Avon Crismore
Meg Gallagher
Anne Hay
Asghar Iran-Nejad
Margi Laff
Terence Turner
Paul Wilson

Abstract

A questionnaire given to elementary school teachers to assess their beliefs, expectations, and plans for teaching reading was followed with observations of third and fourth grade teachers' reading class lessons to determine whether, as commonly believed, there is a shift to an emphasis on reading comprehension instruction between the primary and intermediate level grades and if so, what is its nature. The questionnaire results indicate changes over grade in procedure and method of organization of the classroom and also that while teachers believe that word level instruction ought to be replaced by text level comprehension instruction in the upper grades, there is little actual change in emphasis. Observations of classrooms show a small decrease over grade in word recognition instruction but no increase in text level comprehension instruction. There is, however, a small increase over grade in silent reading. The overall conclusion is that the reading instruction practice does not conform to teachers' beliefs, nor does it conform to expectations of teacher educators. As a result, major instructional changes may be required before adequate text level comprehension instruction is provided to students.

When Do Children Begin "Reading to Learn"?: A Survey of Classroom Reading Instruction Practices in Grades Two Through Five

A commonly held belief about reading instruction in the elementary grades has been expressed in the phrase, "learning to read and reading to learn." The belief is that students first must learn to read and that then they will utilize their reading skill to learn from written information and to acquire new ideas. A corrollary of the "learning to read and reading to learn" belief is that most of the instructional time in grades 1, 2, and 3 should be spent in teaching students how to recognize words and read fluently, whereas in grades 4, 5, and 6, the instructional time ought to be spent reading diverse texts and learning how to understand, interpret, and evaluate new concepts.

Does this belief still exist among practitioners? If so, upon what is this belief based? Is there an actual change in the method of teaching between grades three and four, such as in the content or materials used for reading instruction, is there a classroom organization change, or could the belief be tied to other changes? The latter is possible because fourth grade coincides with the age when students become more independent socially, able to set up and carry through with their own goals for working and studying. Further, by fourth grade, children usually have acquired enough background knowledge to evaluate what they read as well as to relate what they read to what they already know. Thus, there are three possible explanations for a belief in an instructional shift. There may be an instructional shift, there may be social and managerial changes which are thought to include instructional changes, or there may be both organizational

and content changes. Which situation actually exists should be known, for improvement in instructional practice requires an understanding of the implicit forces which guide it as well as the explicit cognitive demands made of students.

There is little direct evidence to suggest that there is an instructional shift. However, there are grade-to-grade changes in materials and in student competencies which could alter instruction at about the fourth grade. For example:

1. Basal reader textbooks are carefully controlled by readability guidelines. Hence older children read stories that are longer, that contain a greater range of vocabulary, and that vary more in their structure and reading purpose. These changes may require a heavier emphasis on comprehension of information rather than on reading fluency.
2. Before grade four, reading comprehension questions by teachers may be directed towards determining whether students have read the passage accurately whereas in later grades questions may be aimed at analyzing and evaluating text information.
3. As students become more proficient readers, teachers may encourage students to read novels and informational books in place of textbooks.
4. As students become more skilled at expressing themselves verbally, teachers may replace workbook tasks with text writing tasks.

It is also likely that major organizational changes in classroom management occur. It might then seem to teachers that more reading comprehension instruction is also happening in the upper grades. For example:

1. School systems often have a policy of waiting until grade 4 to assign letter or number grades on children's work. Perhaps the use of more formal grading policies causes teachers to evaluate their students more critically.
2. When school buildings contain three or more classes per grade, teachers in the middle grades sometimes use a departmentalized form of instruction for reading and arithmetic. That is, they regroup students by ability across the three classrooms so that instruction can be directed to a narrower range of achievement.
3. As students become more proficient readers, teachers may group them by students' interest in particular topics rather than by ability.
4. While the type of materials for instruction might not change, the time spent on each type might differ as a function of grade. Thus, more time might be spent in the upper grades on content area textbooks while more time in the lower grades may be devoted to stories in basal readers.

To investigate the questions of whether teachers believe there is an instructional shift and whether any direct evidence can be garnered to support an actual shift toward more comprehension instruction at about the fourth grade, we decided to sample teachers' views about reading instruction and to observe the way they taught. First, to gather information about how teachers view comprehension instruction, a questionnaire was designed that was submitted to second through fifth grade teachers. To get information about how teachers put their views into practice and to document any differences in practice, third and fourth grade teachers were observed as they taught reading in their classrooms.

Both the questionnaire and observation components of the study focus on how, at different grade levels, (a) classrooms are managed, (b) students are grouped for instruction, (c) reading materials are selected, and (d) reading tasks vary in quality and quantity. While the general issue of how much reading comprehension is taught over the elementary grades is studied, the more specific issue is whether there is a change in procedure, in instructional topic, or in both.

Educators' Views about Comprehension Instruction

A review of reading methods textbooks used in teacher training courses reveals that, if there is a belief among teachers that there is a difference in the amount of comprehension instruction in the primary and intermediate grades, such a belief does not originate in reading methods textbooks. Nearly a dozen currently popular textbooks were surveyed; not one advocated that comprehension activities be delayed until the intermediate grades.

The prevailing message in all of these texts is that comprehension activities should begin early. There is little or nothing written advising the delay of such activities or advocating a change in focus as the students move through the grades. For example, Gray (1956) said that

> "as soon as pupils have acquired the initial reading attitudes, they are prepared to begin the use of a primer, or a book of similar difficulty. The aims are now broader in scope, with special emphasis upon the following: to strengthen the habit of looking for meaning in all reading activities; to establish the habit of following the lines regularly; to anticipate, and keep in mind the sequence of ideas read; to encourage the habit of interpreting what is read in the light of personal experiences; to increase accuracy and independence in word recognition; and to deepen interest in learning to read well." (p. 133)

Jenkinson (1965) argued against the notion that critical reading be delayed until the upper grades, emphasizing that

> "an attitude of inquiry toward the content of the code must be instilled from the beginning . . . The art of self-posed questions must be developed from grade one." (p. 12)

In his 1974 text, Ruddell commented similarly:

> You need not postpone teaching research and study skills necessary for reading in the content areas until the fourth grade, as was widely believed in the past. You can introduce these skills as early as kindergarten with sequencing games and activities, learning letters of alphabet, interpreting pictures and following directions. (p. 410)

Harris and Smith (1976) as well advised that

> "critical reading skills can and should be developed gradually from the early grades." (p. 264)

Only one of the textbook writers (Durkin, 1974) hinted at a reason for not emphasizing comprehension in beginning reading instruction.

> Ideally, written material at the beginning ought to be comprised of vocabulary and sentence structure that do not go beyond what a child can comprehend in spoken language. When this is the case, beginning instruction does not have to give large amounts of time to comprehension but, instead, can concentrate on helping children learn to remember familiar words presented visually. (p. 403)

But, Durkin's general message is the same as the other authors'--comprehension should be taught from the beginning of reading instruction.

There is also no evidence from analyses of basal reader scope and sequence charts and teacher manuals that comprehension instruction in the early grades is avoided. Rosenshine (1977) compared charts for the first three semesters of five primary grade basal reading series and found that comprehension skills were generally introduced by the end of first grade.

These included so-called high level skills such as drawing conclusions, recognizing main ideas, making inferences, and recognizing cause and effect relationships. Durkin (1981) examined manuals from five basal programs, studying comprehension instruction for all grades in elementary school. In kindergarten through third grade there were from 27 to 88 instructional recommendations for comprehension activity, an average of 62.5, while in the upper grades there were from 27 to 49, an average of 37.6. It is apparent, then, that there is no support from teacher instructional texts or materials for a delay of comprehension instruction until the fourth or fifth grade.

Researchers' Views About Comprehension Instruction

Most of the research on instructional practice in reading comprehension in elementary schools is based on surveys of teachers and observations of classroom instruction. Most of these studies have compared comprehension instruction across grade levels, and have done so from several points of view.

Differences in teachers' perceptions of comprehension teaching at varying grades are reflected in a survey conducted of elementary school teachers in Oklahoma City. Martin and Chambers (1974) found that the notion of "learning to read and reading to learn" reflected the philosophy of the majority of teachers in that district. The results of their survey indicate that the teachers they questioned believe reading instruction should concentrate on the acquisition of reading skills in the first three grades and on teaching students to comprehend what they read in the upper grades.

Austin and Morrison (1963) obtained a similar result from some of their questions in a survey of teachers and other personnel in 795 school districts. In this survey, teachers, supervisors, and other district administrators answered general and specific questions about how much time they spent teaching or planning for reading.

The questionnaire responses were reported by grouping grade one with two, grade three with four, and grade five with six. To the general question, "How much time is devoted to reading comprehension?" there were no significant differences across the grade levels. (Of the teachers surveyed in the first two grades, 77% responded "considerable," as did 81% in the middle grades and 80% in the upper grades.) In contrast, substantial differences across these grade groupings appeared when teachers responded to more specific questions. To the question, "How much time is devoted to critical reading?" "considerable" was the response given by 12% of the teachers in the lower grades, 20% of the teachers in the middle grades, and 51% of the teachers in the upper grades. Similarly, to the question, "How much time is devoted to silent reading?", "considerable" was chosen by 43% of the lower grade teachers, 65% of the middle grade teachers, and 77% of the upper grade teachers. And to "How much time is devoted to developing reading skills and vocabulary in the content areas?" 17% of the lower grade teachers said "considerable" whereas that response was chosen by 31% of the middle grade teachers and 57% of the upper grade teachers. Hence, while teachers believe they spend considerable time teaching comprehension, they apparently believe that higher leveled comprehension is emphasized in the upper but not in the lower grades.

Quite different results are obtained from observations of classrooms. In a classroom observation study Durkin (1979) observed reading and social studies instruction in 12 classrooms in third through sixth grade in three different schools. She found that the amount of time devoted to comprehension instruction did not vary from grade to grade, and in fact, she found little comprehension instruction at any grade level. She defines comprehension instruction narrowly, distinguishing it from some other aspects of instruction: assessment, application, helps with assignment, assignment, review of instruction, preparation for reading, and prediction. Although Durkin acknowledges that some of these other aspects of instruction are likely to advance children's comprehension abilities and might be classified as comprehension instruction, she wanted to isolate instruction in comprehension that had as its goal specifically helping students understand what they read. Her definition of comprehension instruction is "teacher does/says something to help children understand or work out the meaning of more than a single isolated word." Assessment is defined as "teacher does/says something in order to learn whether what was read was comprehended." Durkin's data reveal that during the reading period although very little time (1%) was spent on comprehension instruction, a great deal of time was spent on comprehension assessment (18% of the time), help with assignment (12%), and preparation for work (10%). She also found that non-instruction and transition activities accounted for a lot of teacher time (11% and 10% respectively).

In addition to observing reading and social studies instruction in 12 third through sixth grade classrooms, Durkin also observed instruction in reading and social studies in 24 fourth grade classrooms. She again

found that the greatest percentage of the time spent during the reading period was devoted to assignment, help with assignment, preparation for reading and assessment. She found that little or no time was given to comprehension instruction, application, review of instruction and prediction.

In a 1970 observational study that took place in 67 elementary schools, Goodlad (1979) found that "telling and questioning, usually in total class groups, constituted the prevailing teaching method; the inquiry or discovery method was seldom evident."

Guszak (1967) observed teacher questioning behaviors in four classrooms each of grades two, four, and six. He found little increase in the fourth and sixth grades in the number of questions that required students "to explain, make a conjecture, or translate." Of the 1857 questions that were recorded in the classrooms, only 85 questions required students to give answers that involved explaining, making conjectures, or translating. There were 33 questions that required students to verify an answer, and only 36 to evaluate an answer. On the other hand, 1603 questions involved the recall or recognition of information. Such question patterns suggest that most questioning time is taken up with details rather than reflection or interpretation, and that this is true in each of the three grades observed.

It is apparent from this survey of research that interpretation of the evidence about comprehension instruction is affected by what is assumed to <u>constitute</u> comprehension instruction. If comprehension instruction is interpreted globally to include any sort of meaning activity related to written text, then according to some of the studies just discussed, primary <u>and</u> intermediate level teachers seem to devote a good part of their reading instruction time to comprehension instruction. If comprehension instruction

is narrowly defined, then the amount of comprehension instruction that occurs is seen to be very limited, and is as limited in the upper grades as in the lower grades.

Another problem of evaluating the evidence is the method of gathering information. When comprehension instruction is assessed by teacher questionnaires, as in the Austin and Morrison survey, intermediate grade teachers report more attention to higher-level aspects of comprehension instruction than do primary teachers. Similarly, the Oklahoma teachers surveyed said they thought reading instruction in the intermediate grades could be characterized by the phrase "reading to learn," whereas in the primary grades the students were "learning to read." Yet, the observational studies indicate little attention to comprehension instruction at any time, and above all, do not reveal a shift to "higher-level" questioning activities in the intermediate grades.

Perhaps an explanation for this diverse and confusing picture of comprehension instruction that is revealed by these books, surveys and studies lies in the considerable vagueness about the nature of comprehension instruction itself. Do teachers, researchers, textbook writers and basal program writers agree as to what it is? The questionnaire survey and classroom observations of the present study represents an attempt to probe more deeply into teachers' beliefs about comprehension instruction and into how those beliefs are manifested in classroom instructional activities.

The Study

The study has two parts. For the first part, teachers described how they teach reading in their classrooms by filling out a questionnaire. For

the second part what 20 of the same teachers did when they taught reading in their classrooms was documented. An instrument was designed for each part of the study, a teacher questionnaire for Part One and a classroom observation form for Part Two. (Copies of the questionnaire and observation instrument are in the Appendix.)

The Setting and the Subjects

The study took place in a small industrial city in the middle west during the spring of 1978. The city was chosen because it is representative of medium sized industrial cities in the United States. The population of the city is about 90,000 and has an enrollment of 19,000 students in four high schools, five middle schools and 25 elementary schools. There are other students enrolled in Catholic and other private schools.

The largest proportion of the employed adult population work in manufacturing and processing plants. Clerical and other skilled workers in offices, professionals, and the staff of the public schools and two community colleges form another group of employed adults. Black and other minority group members make up about 15% of the population. Except for a recent immigration of some additional minority families, the population has been relatively stable for the past decade.

According to information obtained from the teachers on the questionnaire, the wage earners in the families of students are: professional or managerial, 22%; clerical or skilled, 29%; unskilled, 29%; and unemployed, 19%.

Over 90% of the public school teachers in grades two through five responded to the questionnaire survey. Of these teachers, 6% had taught

one year or less, 18% had taught for 2 to 5 years, 23% for 6-10 years, 33% for 11-20 years, and 20% for more than 20 years.

The Instruments

We were concerned that instructional terms appearing on the questionnaire and the observation form would be understood by the teachers answering the questionnaires and by the observers using the observation forms. The teachers were to fill out the questionnaires in an unsupervised setting and the observers, once trained, were to code type and duration of instructional events without our supervision. We were well aware of the confusion surrounding the words and phrases used to describe reading instruction, and especially comprehension instruction.

We met the problem of varying interpretations of the terms used to describe reading instruction by incorporating the labels for the teaching of decoding and comprehension that typically appear in the manuals that accompany basal reading materials. Then we piloted the forms in third and fourth grade classrooms and discussed observations and the questionnaire form with several teachers. After several revisions we were satisfied that the questionnaire and observation form would be interpreted by the teachers and the observers as we intended it. We ended up using labels on both instruments that we found teachers to understand.

Instructional tasks from the questionnaire and the observational form are listed below to show how similarly conceptualized events were described. The headings did not appear on either the questionnaire or the observation form but identify the three content areas which are to be described later.

Questionnaire	Observation Form
Word recognition tasks	
Read fluently (orally)	_____
Recognize by sight most words encountered in classroom reading materials	Word recognition
Use phonetic skills or structural analysis to decode most unfamiliar words	Word attack
Word-level and sentence-level comprehension tasks	
Recall important facts and details from paragraphs and stories	Recalling or locating facts and details
Understand and follow directions	Following directions
Use context to figure out new words	_____
Understand meaning of most words encountered in classroom reading lessons	Word meaning understanding
_____	Interpreting sentences
Text-level comprehension tasks	
Grasp main idea of most written passages	Summarizing: finding main idea
Draw appropriate inferences and conclusions from paragraphs and stories	Interpreting paragraphs or stories
Recognize author's purpose	Literary forms, devices; author's purpose
Sequence and summarize information from paragraphs and stories	Sequencing information
Understand cause and effect relationships in text material	_____
Use study skills (dictionaries, charts, etc.) effectively	Using reference materials Study skills
_____	Sentence structure, grammar

Locate information in texts and other books	_____
_____	Writing reports, stories, poems
_____	Punctuation and capitalization

Some procedural and organizational dimensions of classroom practice were also presented in the questionnaire and measured through observation of third and fourth grades. They are noted next.

Questionnaire	Observational Data
Grouping across classrooms noted in terms of extent of departmentalized programs	Departmentalized vs. intact classrooms
Grouping within classrooms noted in terms of flexibility, criteria, and number of groups	Number of children taught as a group
Evaluation of student progress	_____
Distribution of time on tasks	Average amount of time taken on tasks while instructing students and by students working at seats
Use of published materials (textbooks, workbooks, guides, supplementary materials)	Average amount of time spent using various materials to instruct students and for students working at seats
_____	Average amount of time spent in preparation for instruction versus carrying out instruction
_____	Average amount of time spent using varying social interaction structures for instruction
_____	Average amount of time spent by instructed and independent students on reading and non-reading activities

Procedures

The questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was passed out to all grade two through five teachers during a district meeting. A good number of the completed questionnaires were collected at a subsequent meeting by a representative of the district's central administration. Follow-up notices

were sent to teachers who did not turn in the questionnaires at that meeting. Ultimately, over ninety percent of the teachers who received questionnaires returned them.

Responses to the questionnaire were tabulated separately for teachers from each grade. Teachers who noted that they taught two grades were classified with the lower grade because in almost every mixed grade class, most of the children were reading texts from the lower grade. For some questions teachers could add other information. In those cases, the fixed responses to the questions were adjusted by the teachers' added comments.

The classroom observations. Observations were made in 20 classrooms, ten classrooms each of grades three and four. Classrooms were not chosen at random from the entire district but rather were selected by the curriculum supervisors. The supervisors selected rooms in which they thought observers would be able to work in an unobtrusive way. Most of the classrooms were in schools in middle class neighborhoods. Two retired teachers from the district were trained as observers and collected all the data. Within a two-week period three different reading periods were observed in each of the 20 classrooms. The observations took place early in the second semester.

Two separate sets of observations were collected simultaneously by one observer: the first included a detailed description of the teacher's activities, the mode of instruction, the number of students with the teacher, the materials being used, the kinds of tasks the teachers and students were engaged in, as well as the time that was spent on each segment of the reading period. The second set of observations documented what students working independently were doing.

The observation form had been tried out in a pilot by pairs of observers in four classrooms before this study. Revisions were then made so that essentially all types of classroom activities could be recorded and so that observers using the schedule had a high degree of agreement about the recorded classroom activities. As a final check, four classroom lessons were simultaneously observed by a regular observer and one of our staff. The few disagreements (on task type) were resolved by rechecking the listed assignment.

Results from the observation forms were tabulated separately for third and fourth grades--for students working in small or large groups with the teacher, and for students working independently. For students with the teacher the observations of the reading period were coded (and monitored with respect to how time was spent) in five ways:

1. lesson characteristics (preparing, reviewing, presenting new information)
2. social context (teacher-student interaction structure for instruction
3. mode of student response (reading, writing or listening)
4. instructional material (books, workbooks, etc.)
5. nature of the task (types of decoding and comprehension tasks)

The observations of students working independently were coded in three ways:

1. mode of student response
2. instructional material
3. nature of the task

The procedure for coding observations is fully described in the appendix. In brief, an observer looks at the list of activities and, using the observation form, fills it out in this order: the time, the lesson characteristic and social context; the group size and an indication of the ability level of the group; the mode of activity for students; the material and, if a text or workbook, the book title and page; the task being carried out by students; and finally a brief description of the activity. Whenever an activity changes, the observer notes the time and fills out a new row of information. At the end of 10 minutes (and every 10 minutes thereafter), the observer turns from observing the teacher and the students with the teacher to the other students in the classroom. The observer walks around the room, counting the number of students engaged in different activities, noting mode of activity, instructional material and page numbers, and the type of tasks. This dual system of observation provides a fairly accurate accounting of activities directly supervised by the teacher and a rough indication of independent student activity. It should be noted that the brief descriptions of each activity that the observer wrote were particularly useful. These activity descriptions were used for checking observer consistency and for after-the-fact coding of infrequent activities and events that had no coded designation.

Results: Information from the Questionnaire

Evidence of Change in Classroom Organization, Procedure, and Materials

Information obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire items that pertained to classroom organization and procedure was divided into five categories. The titles of these categories are listed below and will be described in the same order.

1. Classroom Organization
2. Grouping for Reading Instruction
3. Distribution of Time on Reading Tasks
4. Evaluation of Students
5. Use of Published Materials

Classroom organization. Teachers were asked how they organized their students for instruction (Question 6). The teacher's answers to this question reveal that there are two primary ways classrooms are organized for reading instruction. Teachers either teach reading to all of the students in their homeroom classrooms (with some students receiving supplementary reading instruction elsewhere) or they teach only some of the students from their homerooms along with some students from other classes. In most buildings this second kind of organization takes the form of a departmentalized reading program; in others there is a more informal exchange of reading groups between one or more teachers.

Table 1 presents information about classroom organization for the four grades. Eighty percent of the teachers in grade two teach reading to all of the students in their homeroom class. But 74% of these teachers have at least some students who get supplementary work in reading in some sort of pull out program. Twenty percent of the teachers in grade two are involved in a departmentalized program or in some other exchange of students for reading.

Insert Table 1 about here.

A little over half of the third grade teachers (sometimes with the help of a classroom aide) teach reading to all of their homeroom students.

The remainder are involved in some sort of student exchange with one or more teachers.

A majority of the fourth and fifth grade teachers (71% and 77% respectively) are a part of either a departmentalized reading program or an informal exchange of reading groups with other teachers.

It is evident that as students progress through the grades, they are more likely to be taught reading in groupings that cut across classrooms.

Grouping for reading instruction. In a series of questions the teachers were asked if and how they grouped their students for reading instruction (Questions 7.0 through 7.4). The answers reveal that the vast majority of students are grouped for reading instruction. All of the teachers in the second grade and over 90% of the teachers in each of the other grades group their students when they teach reading. All of the teachers in the lower grades use the ability of the students as the only criterion for forming student groups, whereas for 7% of the teachers in the fourth grade and 25% of the teachers in the fifth grade, other criteria are sometimes used (Table 2, upper section).

Insert Table 2 about here.

An assessment of teachers' flexibility in grouping was made by asking questions about types of reading tasks that they taught to the entire class or to individual students. About 80% of those teachers across the four grades who group their students for reading instruction also sometimes work with the entire class as well as with individual students. The kinds of tasks that teachers teach the entire class vary from grade to grade. The second grade teachers list phonics skills most frequently, followed by

spelling, creative writing, grammar, comprehension, listening, vocabulary, silent reading and rhyming activities. Third grade teachers give dictionary usage as the most frequent whole class reading activity. They also list phonics, listening skills, vocabulary and activities with the Weekly Readers. Fourth grade teachers mention the Weekly Reader activities most often, then language arts, creative writing, research skills and reading in other subject areas. Interestingly enough, the fifth grade teachers say that decoding activities are what they do with the entire class most often; these are followed by dictionary usage, following directions, group reading and discussion, and reading in other subject areas.

Phonics and other decoding activities are most frequently mentioned as what the teachers do when they work individually with children in the second and third grades. Fourth and fifth grade teachers list "remedial work" (the nature of which is unspecified) and the fourth grade teachers also mention alphabetizing and vocabulary instruction.

To get some information about how teachers think about grouping students of different abilities, two questions about hypothetical situations were asked (Questions 9 and 10). The teachers were asked, if they were teaching students who were reading a grade level lower than the students in their present class, how they would change their organization of students for the teaching of reading. They were also asked the same question about students reading a grade level higher. The analyses of these responses indicate that many teachers view less able children as needing more small group and more individualized instruction, whereas the prevailing view about more able students is that the teachers would organize them in about the same way as they do their present students. No abrupt grade to grade

shifts appear. These views are reasonably consistent across the grades (see Table 2, lower sections).

Responses to Question 7.2 seem to suggest group size changes across grades. There is a reported average of three groups in second grade classrooms, between two and three groups in the third grades and two groups in the fourth and fifth grades. However, since more upper grade teachers use departmentalized instruction, the change in the number of groups is a function in part of an increase in the upper grades of whole class reading instruction.

The questions about grouping reveal that most students are taught to read in small groups and that, except for fifth graders, groups are established on the basis of reading ability. Group size is thought to need adjustment downward with younger and lower achieving students. However, teachers apparently give some reading instruction to large groups as well as to individuals at all four grade levels.

Distribution of time on reading tasks. Teachers were asked how students spent their time during reading instruction (Question 8). They were asked to estimate how much time their students spent doing worksheet exercises, reading silently, reading aloud in groups, reading aloud singly and other reading related activities. Only small differences over grade are apparent (see Table 3). The teachers estimate that worksheet exercises account for increasingly more time in the upper grades (from 28% of the time in the second grade to 33% of the time in the fifth grade), while oral reading (in groups and individually) decreases over the four grades (from 31% of the time in the second grade to 23% of the time in the fifth grade). Silent reading occupies from 21% to 24% of class time and other

reading-related activities take between 20% and 16% of class time across grade levels.

Insert Table 3 about here.

Teachers' estimates of time spent on types of reading activities suggests that there are only minor grade changes. Nevertheless, the changes are in agreement with teachers' beliefs about an instructional shift. That is, there is a small decrease in reported oral reading over the grades and a small increase in use of independent worksheet activity.

Evaluation of students. Teachers were asked what they found helpful in organizing their students into reading groups (Question 11). A list of sources of information about students followed the question. The teachers put a check next to those sources they found helpful and put two checks next to the ones they found most helpful. Teachers usually checked most of the categories listed (Table 4). Categories most frequently checked by teachers at all grades are test information (standardized tests and informal screening tests), completion of basal materials, and oral reading fluency. Of the categories listed on the questionnaire, reading interest is least frequently checked.

Insert Table 4 about here.

There are differences across grades in the kind of classroom performance information the teachers find useful. Second and third grade teachers utilize oral reading fluency, oral language, and answers to reading comprehension questions. Fourth grade teachers also use reading comprehension answers, while both fourth and fifth grade teachers emphasize

current progress in workbooks. The interest among second and third grade teachers in oral reading fluency for evaluative purposes is consistent with the notion that reading progress is measured by demonstrating that students know how to read. The shift away from oral reading and oral language to written productions as a source of information about student performance in fourth and fifth grades suggests a change by teachers to students' interpretations of printed information. Thus, the responses agree with the belief that the early grades feature learning to read while the upper grades deal more with reading to learn.

Use of published materials. The teachers were asked if and how extensively they use a published basal reading series (Question 12). The city-wide policy was that teachers in the lower grades were to use basal materials published by Lippincott Company and in the higher grades, materials published by Ginn and Company. Teachers' answers to the question about basal materials reflect this policy. All but two teachers affirm that basal readers "play an important role" in their reading instruction. The use of Ginn increases across grades from 52% of the classrooms in the second grade to 97% of the classrooms in the fifth grade, while Lippincott use decreases from 50% to 0%. The principal shift in program occurs between second and third grades.

Textbook use was also analyzed in terms of the materials provided for each reading ability group. As shown in Table 5, teachers in the second grade usually provide Ginn materials for lower achieving students but use Lippincott for middle and high achieving students. However, in third and fourth grades somewhat fewer low achieving students are using Ginn. Thus teachers tend to delay a synthetic phonics approach to beginning reading

for low achieving students but continue using the approach after middle and high achieving students have shifted to the other basal series.

Insert Table 5 about here.

Overall use of basal materials also changes over grade (Table 6). Daily use of textbooks, workbooks and teacher guides drops sharply as a function of grade and of reading achievement. Seventy-seven percent of second grade

---
Insert Table 6 about here.
---

teachers, but only 20% of fifth grade teachers, use basal readers daily; over all grades, they use basals daily with 44% of the highest achieving students, with 49% of the middle group, and with 60 and 74% of the two lowest achieving groups. Smaller changes over grade and ability appear for workbook and teacher guidebook usage. However, nearly all teachers use readers and workbooks at least one to three times a week. Only 7% say they never use basals and 3% never use workbooks.

Supplementary materials are used somewhat less often but again are used more often by lower grade teachers than by upper grade teachers (78% down to 49%). There is a smaller decrease over grade for teacher-made materials (80% to 67%).

Teachers were also asked whether guidebooks were used as prescribed, modified slightly, or modified substantially. Seventy-three percent of the teachers modify them slightly or not at all; 17% modify them substantially.

Summary

The responses to the questionnaire indicate substantial grade-to-grade differences in classroom organization, grouping for reading instruction, distribution of time, evaluation of students, and use of published materials. With one exception, these responses do not indicate any abrupt shifts between grades three and four. On the contrary, what occurs is a gradual change over the four grades in classroom organization, and in the use of materials.

Classrooms are organized differently for reading instruction in the lower and upper elementary grades. The lower grades use intact, homeroom-teacher taught reading lessons while the upper grades use more cross grade groupings than intact, homeroom groupings. The lower grades group by ability but some fifth grade teachers group by interest in topic. The upper grades have fewer groups per classroom and more whole class instruction. Teachers in upper grades make more use of workbooks to evaluate student progress and less use of oral comprehension answers and oral reading than do teachers in the lower grades. Finally, basal reading materials, while used by most teachers at least once weekly, are not used every day by as many upper grade teachers as lower grade teachers and not used as often for high achieving students as low achieving students.

While the results so far do not indicate that an abrupt shift occurs between grades three and four, they do indicate that there are substantial changes in classroom structure between grades two and five. However, the changes appear to be providing opportunities for increasingly more independent work habits over grade than for an instructional shift to "reading to learn."

Evidence of Change in Instructional Content of Reading Lessons

Three questions were asked to determine teachers' perceptions of which instructional tasks were foremost at each grade level. These questions were:

1. What do you consider the most important reading activities at each grade level?
2. What reading activities could most of your students do at the beginning of the school year?
3. What reading activities are you emphasizing in your grade this semester?

Each of these questions utilized an identical list of 14 reading activities. For reporting convenience, as noted earlier, these activities are grouped into three categories: (a) text level comprehension activities, (b) word and sentence level comprehension activities, and (c) word recognition activities.

The responses to the three questions were analyzed to determine teachers' perceptions of what should be taught at each grade level in comparison to what they were teaching and what they thought their students already knew. The analyses considered whether teachers' perceptions differ over grade, whether teachers are consistent in their answers to the three questions, and whether their plans vary over student achievement as well as over grade.

What do you consider the most important reading activities at each grade level? This was a question designed to find out what teachers think ought to be taught at each grade level. The teachers were asked to check the three activities they considered most important from the 14 listed

(Question 15). Each teacher was asked to do this separately for each of the grades. The teachers were to also rank order the three activities they selected for each grade level. Tallies of checks for each activity were then transformed to a percentage of checks made at each grade level.

Teachers checked fewer word recognition activities for fourth and fifth grade students than they did for second and third grade students (Figure 1), suggesting that decoding and phonics instruction and reading fluency practice is thought less important instructionally in the upper grades than in the lower grades. They checked somewhat fewer word and sentence level comprehension activities in the upper than lower grades (Figure 2), but they checked far more text level comprehension activities for upper grade students than for lower grade students (Figure 3). This suggests that instruction on inferencing, sequencing, summarizing, locating information, understanding an author's purpose and understanding cause and effect relationships is thought to be increasingly important over the four grades. Of the seven text-level comprehension activities listed, only one, understanding the main idea of a passage, was thought important in the early grades.

Insert Figures 1, 2, and 3 about here.

Hence, responses to the question about what <u>ought</u> to be taught suggests that teachers believe that a shift over grade in the instruction of reading is appropriate. They indicate that word recognition activities should become less important after third grade, word and sentence-level comprehension activities should become somewhat less important in the upper

grades, and text level comprehension activities should become increasingly more important over the four grades.

What reading activities could most of your students do at the beginning of the school year? In this question, the first on the questionnaire, teachers were asked to check from among the 14 listed activities any which they thought their students "could do with ease at the beginning of the school year." Teachers checked information for only the grade they taught and could check as many activities as they wished. Hence, reported percentages for each grade sum above 100%. Second grade teachers typically checked 5 or 6 activities, third grade teachers checked 6 activities, fourth grade teachers, 6 or 7 activities, and fifth grade teachers, 7 activities.

Figure 4 displays grade-by-grade percentages for the averaged values for activities within each of the three categories. It is readily apparent that teachers perceive their students as being much less competent on comprehension activities than on word recognition activities and that text level comprehension activities are least well understood. Table 7, which provides a breakdown of each category, shows that, except for main idea, teachers perceive the activities within each category similarly. That is, all word recognition activities are thought to be well understood while text level comprehension activities are for the most part thought to be not well understood. What is surprising, however, is the lack of increase over grade. Very few activities are perceived as being more understandable by upper than by lower grade students. Most change little or else fluctuate in an uninterpretable manner.

Insert Figure 4 and Table 7 about here.

An explanation for the relatively flat character of these responses over the four grades is that the terms are general code names for a wide assortment of decoding and comprehension tasks. In lower grades, when vocabulary in stories is controlled, there are fewer new words and simpler letter patterns. As text and workbook materials increase in difficulty over grade, the real tasks that are similarly labeled also increase in difficulty. This may explain the reported competency decrease for "Use phonetic skills or structural analysis." These skills may not be considered mastered even by fifth grade because the words in stories are longer and demand syllabic analysis skills rather than the letter-sound analysis of the lower grades. Similarly, teachers at succeeding grade levels are likely to require students to perform more complex interpretations or analyses on comprehension tasks. For example, second graders might only be asked to report the first or last sentence of a text as the "main idea" while fifth graders might be asked to construct one using their own words.

An explanation for the low percentages on text comprehension activities is that teachers are correctly perceiving that their students are not yet competent. Comparing, for example, the reported percentages of the text-level comprehension activities in Table 7 shows that only main idea activities were thought by second, third and fourth grade teachers to be as well understood as the word recognition and word and sentence level comprehension activities in those grades. It is also the only text level comprehension activity that teachers indicated in the previous question was as important to teach in the early grades as word recognition. It is conceivable, then, that the belief that few text-level comprehension activities ought to be taught in the early grades is generally matched by

little text level comprehension instruction and thus by realistic, low student competency assessments.

What reading activities are you emphasizing in your grade this semester? The responses to this question (Question 13) stand in definite contrast to the responses to the question about what teachers think ought to be taught at each grade level, as well as to the question about what students know at the beginning of the school year. The teachers were asked to check those activities they were emphasizing during the current semester. They were also asked to report this information separately for their high, middle, and low achieving students. If teachers taught only one group of students, these responses were classified according to the grade level of the text being used for instruction (that is: above-grade text--high group, on-grade text--middle group, below-grade text--low group). The teachers could check as many activities as they wished so that percentage figures sum above 100%. The average percent of checks for each activity per grade and for each reading achievement group are reported in Table 8. From those percentages, two sets of summaries are reported, one looking at the results over grade (Figure 5) and the other over student reading achievement (Figure 6).

Insert Table 8 about here.

Figure 5 presents the average percent of checks made by teachers at each grade, collapsed over achievement and type of activity. Very small changes are apparent. Text level comprehension activities are given slightly more emphasis in the upper grades than in the second grade. Word recognition and word and sentence level comprehension activities are given

gradually less emphasis over the four grades. By fifth grade text level comprehension is emphasized a little more than word recognition but throughout the four grades word and sentence level comprehension is emphasized the most.

Insert Figure 5 about here

Figure 6 presents teachers' perceptions of instruction as a function of students' reading achievement, collapsing over grade and activity. These data reveal that teachers make, or believe that they make, greater adjustments for differences in students' reading ability than they do for differences in grade. High achieving students are given instruction that emphasizes comprehension; average achieving students receive more word and sentence level comprehension than word recognition and text comprehension; low achieving students receive mostly word recognition and word and sentence level instruction. According to teachers' own reports, there is little difference over grade in the stress they place on most reading activities but there is a substantial difference in emphasis as a function of achievement.

Insert Figure 6 about here.

Summary

There is a striking incongruity between what teachers say ought to be emphasized at different grade levels and what they say they do emphasize. Although teachers say they believe there ought to be a substantial grade-to-grade shift in emphasis from word recognition to text level comprehension activities, they acknowledge only a small grade-to-grade increase in

instructional emphasis of text level comprehension over word and sentence comprehension. However, within grade they do differentiate their instruction, for when responses are coded in terms of whether the students are reading above, at, or below their grade level, high performing students are said to receive appreciable instruction on text level comprehension, while less able students obtain mostly word recognition and word and sentence level comprehension instruction. Scanning Table 8 confirms in an impressive way this agreement among each grade level. Every text level comprehension activity (except main idea) is given more emphasis to higher achieving than to lower achieving students.

There is also an incongruity between what teachers say they are teaching now and what they say their students could do with ease at the beginning of the school year. Teachers report higher competence on word recognition and word level comprehension activities than on text level comprehension activities. We had then expected, at least in the upper grades, to find greater emphasis on text level comprehension activities. Yet except in grade five, these activities are given less emphasis than all other activities. It is not surprising now that teachers report such low competence among their students on text level comprehension tasks. They are apparently not providing the instruction that they acknowledge implicitly is needed.

Thus, the questionnaire responses suggest that the learning to read--reading to learn belief is just that, and no more. Rather than describing instructional practice, the belief indicates an attitude about what practices ought to occur. While there are changes in classroom practice, they appear to be changes in organization, use of materials, not in

instructional topic. This tentative conclusion will now be addressed through the more direct approach, observation of classrooms.

To determine whether there is an instructional shift between third and fourth grade, a procedure was developed for recording events in reading periods. As noted earlier, the procedure requires the observer to alternate between watching the activities of the students the teacher is working with, and watching the activities of students working alone. The observer records all audible teacher-student interaction events and, at ten minute intervals, scans the room to note the behaviors of students working on their own.

General Observation Results

Twenty teachers were observed, each on three occasions, making a total of 60 observed reading periods, 30 for third grade, and 30 for fourth grade. Third grade reading periods lasted an average of 55 minutes; fourth grade periods lasted 51 minutes. Within each lesson there were an average of 11.2 interaction events of instructed students and 5.6 scans of students working independently. There were about 29 third grade students and 32 fourth grade students in each classroom. At any given time in third grade rooms about 22 students were working independently while 7 were being instructed by the teacher. In fourth grade about 20 students were working independently and 12 were with the teacher.

Observations of Teachers Working with Students

The activities of the teacher and instructed students are reported in Table 9. Five aspects of the analysis are presented: (a) lesson characteristic, (b) interaction pattern, (c) student response mode,

(d) instructional materials, and (e) reading activities. Since each is an independent analysis, each sums to 100% of the total reading period. The first two analyses that follow describe how the teacher presents lesson material. What is taught and how the student interacts with the teacher during the lesson appear in the last three analyses.

Insert Table 9 about here.

Lesson characteristics. Table 9 indicates that more than 25% of the available time is spent preparing students for work while less than half the time is devoted to the presentation of new work. New and review work engage third grade students for a longer percent of the time than fourth grade students (70% vs. 53%). By contrast, fourth grade teachers spend a greater percent of time checking students' work and working with individuals.

Interaction patterns. Both third and fourth grade teachers most often use a teacher-question/student-response interaction pattern in which the teacher asks a question and calls on a student to answer. Nearly as frequent is the lecture pattern in which the teacher either calls on students to discuss information or has students listen to a presentation of information. These two interaction patterns take 70% of the class instruction time in both grades. The two grades differ in that third grade teachers more often use a round robin format in which students read or answer questions in a fixed order while fourth grade teachers more often call on students or ask for volunteers.

Student response mode. The response mode describes the interactional behaviors of those students who are working with the teacher. In both grades nearly 50% of the time involves a verbal interaction with the

teacher and 20% involves listening to the teacher. These sum to nearly the 70% of the reading period as noted above. Hence, nearly 50% of the reading period is utilized by answering or discussing information with the teacher. Twenty percent of the time has students listening to the teacher. Of the remaining 30% of the time, in third grade most of it is spent in oral reading while in fourth grade most is spent in reading and writing answers (usually worksheet exercises). Very little silent reading occurs in either grade.

Lesson material. The analysis of student material indicates that basal reading materials, workbooks or textbooks, are being used around 60% of the time, with textbooks in greater use in third grade and workbooks in greater use in fourth grade. To our surprise, for an appreciable amount of time students in both grades are not using materials (nearly 20% of the time in third grade and almost 30% in fourth grade). Chalkboard and chart work occur for about 10% of the time. Trade books, dictionaries, or other reading materials are seldom used in either grade.

Student task. While the materials analysis would lead one to expect that third grade students are reading 31% of the reading period time and fourth graders are reading 16% of the time, the task analysis indicates that half of that time third graders are locating information, recalling, or interpreting information rather than reading in a continuous fashion. Thus, in both grades, text reading occurs about 15% of the time. Following directions, which are occasions when students listen to directions for activities they will carry out later, take about 20% of the time in both grades. This helps to explain the high percent of time with no materials.

Differences between the two grades are more evident after being grouped as reading, following directions, and the three content area categories of word recognition, word and sentence level comprehension, and text level comprehension. One difference, which was expected by the responses to the questionnaire, is that word recognition tasks occur for nearly twice as long in third as in fourth grade (16% of the time in third grade and 8.5% of the time in fourth grade).

The other difference, which was not expected, is that fourth grade students spend more time on word and sentence level tasks than do third graders (38% versus 30%). The difference is due entirely to vocabulary instruction. Fourth grade students devote one quarter of their instructional time to locating, discussing, or recalling word meanings. Confirming teachers' questionnaire reports about what they teach rather than what they think ought to be taught, both grades spend about 15% of the time on text level comprehension tasks. However, the greater part of that time is devoted to discussion of story content rather than to analysis of the content. Unaccountably, since teachers believe that they ought to spend time teaching main ideas and think that they do emphasize it, almost no time is spent with main idea tasks. In other respects, though, observation of the reading lessons conforms to what teachers say they emphasize and not to what they believe ought to be emphasized.

Observations of Students Working Independently

Observations of students working at their seats yields three analyses: (a) student response mode, (b) materials, and (c) activities. The data which were transformed to percent of time values are presented in Table 10.

Insert Table 10 about here.

Student response mode. Students working at their desks devote much more of their time to writing than to reading. Writing is interpreted broadly in this analysis to indicate working on a worksheet or creative writing. Third graders are writing more than fourth graders; fourth graders are reading more than third graders. Third graders spend over half their work time writing; while fourth graders spend over one-third of the time writing. For third graders, it is three times as frequent as reading. For fourth graders writing or painting and drawing occur almost twice as often as reading.

In this analysis a larger percent of time categorized is "other." It was assigned if students were looking around, talking to other students, or working on non-reading or unclassifiable academic tasks. The next two analyses distinguish among these categories.

Student materials. The materials analysis defines further the reading and writing response modes. It is now apparent that most writing activities are carried out with worksheet exercises. For both grades worksheets are being filled out for half or more of students' seat work time. Textbooks, dictionaries, or trade books are used for about 25% of the time, though fourth graders are using tradebooks for more time than are third graders.

Student activities. Comparing these results with percentages obtained for instructed students indicates that more reading occurs as seat work in both grades, that much less time is spent by fourth graders as seat work on word and sentence level comprehension tasks, and that time spent on text level comprehension tasks remains the same, about 15% of time in both grades.

In both grades, a large amount of seat work time is not well spent. Students are not working on any academic task for about 17% of their seat time and are engaged in nonreading work for an additional 5 to 15% of the time. Grade comparisons indicate that third graders spend more time on word meaning exercises while fourth graders are reading more and using the period for math and other non-reading work.

Discussion

Observation of grades three and four reinforces the conclusion that a shift from learning to read to reading to learn is a belief that teachers share but do not practice. While the observation reveals instructional as well as organizational differences between third and fourth grade, these are not accompanied by an increase in emphasis on text level comprehension.

There are two related differences in classroom organization. Teachers in third grade carry out more group instruction than do teachers in fourth grade while teachers in fourth grade work more often with individuals than do third grade teachers. The greater group instruction in third grade is a round robin format which the student response analysis indicates is comprised principally of oral reading.

There are four differences over grade in the use of materials. While students are being instructed, third graders are using a textbook twice as long as fourth graders. Fourth graders are more often using a workbook or else have no materials in hand. Seatwork activities indicate a different trend, namely that fourth graders are reading tradebooks and using paper and pencil for longer times than are third graders. Third graders are more often filling out workbooks or are involved in chalkboard, audio, or game activities.

Three differences over grade appear with respect to instructional content. One is that while instructed students in third grade are more often reading orally, fourth graders are more often reading and writing answers. A second is that instructed third grade students receive almost twice as much word recognition instruction as fourth graders but fourth graders are engaged in word meaning instruction almost twice as much. The third difference is that third grade students working at their seats are involved in word meaning tasks more than twice as often as fourth graders; fourth graders are more often reading or doing non-reading tasks.

Differences over the two grades indicate a decrease in emphasis on word recognition and oral reading, an increase in word and sentence level tasks, and an increase in use of trade books. No change appears in text level comprehension instruction.

Are there differences between the earlier and later grades in reading comprehension instruction? Is there an instructional shift? The answer from the observation is reinforced by the questionnaire survey: No, if the definition of instruction is limited to tasks rather than including procedure and organization. While there are very large grade-to-grade differences in teachers' beliefs about what ought to occur and differences in instruction, there is little or no increase over grade in text comprehension activity.

Thus there are differences, but not of the sort that would occur if there was an instructional shift from word recognition to text level comprehension. While there is a decrease over grade in word recognition, there is not a comparable increase in text level comprehension. While students spent gradually less time as they become better readers in oral reading,

they do not increase their attention to summarizing, sequencing, or analyzing texts. Only one small change is in the right direction: fourth graders are given more opportunities to read tradebooks than are third graders.

The understanding of when and how comprehension instruction occurs was the purpose of this project. The central issue was whether there is an instructional shift from learning to read to reading to learn. Neither the questionnaire nor the observation indicate a substantial change to text-level comprehension instruction. Why should this be? Twenty years ago when one of the authors was a fourth grade teacher, she bemoaned the lack of variety of text materials for learning about comprehension and the paucity of good ideas from teacher guides about teaching reading comprehension. Today, although there are more materials and the guides have increased in size, they continue to emphasize word and sentence level comprehension and do not promote an increase over grade in text-level comprehension lessons and activities. Further, although teachers believe they ought to provide text-level instruction, they seldom are so engaged. The only reasonable explanation is that commonly used procedures, practices, or materials somehow conflict with text comprehension instruction goals. Future research should be directed to these possibilities.

References

Austin, M., & Morrison, C. The first R: The Harvard report on reading in elementary schools. New York: Macmillan, 1963.

Durkin, D. What classroom observations reveal about reading comprehension instruction. Reading Research Quarterly, 1979, 14, 481-533.

Durkin, D. Teaching them to read, 2nd edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1974.

Goodlad, J. What goes on in our schools? Educational Researcher, 1977, 6, 3-6.

Gray, W. S. The teaching of reading and writing. Glenview, Ill.: Scott Foresman, 1956, 1969.

Guszak, F. Teacher questioning and reading. Reading Teacher, 1967, 21, 228-234.

Harris, L., & Smith, C. Reading instruction, 2nd edition. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1972.

Jenkenson, M. Laying a foundation for a critical reading program. In J. Figurel (Ed.), Reading and inquiry. Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, 1965.

Martin, M., & Chambers, L. Evaluation of the elementary reading survey K-5, 1973-1974. (ERIC Reproduction Service No. ED 101 320)

Mason, J., Osborn, J., & Rosenshine, B. A consideration of skill hierarchy approaches to the teaching of reading (Tech. Rep. No. 42). Urbana: University of Illinois, Center for the Study of Reading, December 1977.

Ruddell, R. Reading-language instruction: Innovative practices. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974.

Table 1

Classroom Organization

	Percent Response by Grade			
	2	3	4	5
Teach all homeroom class students	6	20	6	15
Teach all homeroom class students but some receive supplementary instruction	74	35	23	8
Teach most homeroom class students but some receive all instruction from others	9	11	14	15
Teach students from two or more classrooms	13	35	57	62

Table 2

Grouping for Reading Instruction

	Grade			
	2	3	4	5
Students are grouped	100%	93%	97%	92%
Grouping is by ability	100	100	93	75
Do not sometimes teach to whole class	22	17	20	15
Do not sometimes teach to individuals	33	30	36	32
Average number of groups	3.1	2.4	2.1	1.9
Range of groups	1-5	1-4	1-4	1-4
Recommendations for children reading year above grade level				
More whole class instruction	9%	24%	19%	18%
More small group instruction	11	5	7	13
More individualized instruction	31	17	7	24
Keep same instruction	44	43	58	29
Other or combination of above	4	12	10	6
Recommendations for children reading year below grade level				
More whole class instruction	5%	10%	3%	11%
More small group instruction	40	26	41	29
More individualized instruction	23	29	24	18
Keep same instruction	28	24	21	21
Other or combination of above	5	12	10	21

Table 3

Distribution of Time on Reading Activities

Type of Activities	Percent Response by Grade			
	2	3	4	5
Work-sheet exercises	28	30	31	33
Reading silently	21	29	27	24
Reading aloud in groups	24	18	18	17
Reading aloud to teacher	7	6	5	6
Reading-related activities	20	16	18	18

Table 4

Evaluation of Students

	Percent Response by Grade			
	2	3	4	5
Testing				
Standardized test scores	65	63	67	63
Informal and screening tests[a]	13	14	12	8
Student progress				
Basals completed in previous grades	65	66	73	58
Past teacher judgment[a]	11	5	15	8
Current progress in workbooks	48	59	73	66
Oral competency				
Oral reading fluency	85	75	58	50
Oral language	48	55	48	34
Reading comprehension answers	87	75	73	50
Interest				
Reading interest	35	34	30	31
Other	0	2	3	5

[a]These categories, which were described by teachers under "other" would probably have received higher values had they been listed on the questionnaire.

Table 5

Use of Ginn[a] and Lippincott[b] Materials as a

Function of Grade and Within-Class Reading Achievement

Reading Achievement	Percent Response by Grade			
	2	3	4	5
High	42/55	94/6	100/0	100/0
Middle	51/58	93/7	91/0	92/0
Low	62/36	77/19	80/11	100/0

[a]Use of Ginn materials, which is displayed above the diagonal, is a basal series controlled primarily by word frequency and emphasizes a sight/phonics approach to instruction in first through third grade.

[b]Use of Lippincott materials, which is displayed below the diagonal, is a basal series controlled primarily by letter-sound patterns and provides a synthetic phonics approach to instruction.

Table 6

Teacher Use of Basal Reading Materials

	Percent Response by Grade			
	2	3	4	5
Basal readers				
Daily use	77	49	26	20
One-three times weekly	23	46	74	78
Less often	0	5	0	2
Workbooks				
Daily use	47	26	3	20
One-three times weekly	50	74	95	77
Less often	3	0	2	3
Teacher guides				
Daily use	84	77	43	44
One-three times weekly	12	23	43	56
Less often	4	0	14	0
Use of published supplementary materials	78	67	67	49
Use of teacher-made materials	80	73	64	67

Table 7

Teacher Reports of What Activities

Most of Their Students Could do with Ease

at the Beginning of the Semester

Task	Percent Response by Grade			
	2	3	4	5
Text level comprehension tasks				
Grasp main idea of most written passages	51	50	59	66
Draw appropriate inferences from texts	40	17	18	26
Recognize author's purpose	4	5	9	18
Sequence and summarize information from texts	13	9	18	34
Understand cause and effect relationships in texts	17	17	6	24
Use study skills effectively	2	5	30	39
Locate information in texts	4	28	23	47
Word and sentence level comprehension tasks				
Recall important facts and details from texts	55	59	56	63
Understand and follow directions	55	52	53	47
Use context to figure out new words	55	59	59	50
Understand meanings of most words encountered in classroom materials	51	57	79	63
Word recognition tasks				
Read fluently (orally)	57	76	73	66
Recognize by sight most words encountered in classroom materials	60	86	91	100
Use phonetic skills or structural analysis to decode most unfamiliar words	91	90	82	74

Table 8

Teachers' Reports of Emphasized Activities for Their Students

Task	Reading Achievement	Percent Response			
		Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Text level comprehension					
Main idea	High	97	100	100	91
	Middle	82	79	88	89
	Low	78	75	91	95
Inference	High	87	100	83	100
	Middle	74	82	60	77
	Low	56	56	52	55
Author's purpose	High	66	56	83	83
	Middle	26	35	36	27
	Low	16	22	09	25
Sequencing	High	87	97	100	83
	Middle	74	91	84	77
	Low	56	75	78	60
Cause and effect	High	74	62	83	74
	Middle	50	35	44	58
	Low	25	19	22	45
Study skills	High	97	100	100	87
	Middle	68	85	76	92
	Low	25	50	57	65
Locating information	High	92	100	91	70
	Middle	53	100	80	89
	Low	31	56	61	75
Word and sentence level comprehension					
Recall facts	High	97	97	87	83
	Middle	87	97	88	81
	Low	94	97	96	70
Follow directions	High	97	97	87	96
	Middle	90	100	88	96
	Low	100	100	100	100
Use context cues	High	79	79	87	65
	Middle	76	82	76	77
	Low	75	78	83	60
Word meaning	High	95	94	91	65
	Middle	95	91	76	73
	Low	72	81	74	50

Table 8 (cont'd)

Task	Reading Achievement	Percent Response			
		Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Word recognition					
Fluent reading	High	76	68	57	39
	Middle	90	65	60	58
	Low	72	81	70	65
Sight word recognition	High	79	74	83	61
	Middle	71	85	60	71
	Low	66	84	83	70
Phonetic skills	High	87	71	65	52
	Middle	87	85	88	65
	Low	94	100	100	75

Table 9

Percent Time by Teachers and Instructed Students of Reading Activities, Materials, and Tasks

	Grade	
	3	4
Lesson characteristic		
Preparation for work	23.6	27.4
Presentation of new work	45.8	36.9
Reviewing	23.8	15.8
Checking individual work	3.4	13.8
Other	3.3	6.0
Interaction pattern		
Question-answer	38.9	41.2
Lecture-discussion	31.6	29.7
Round robin	23.3	10.3
Private (one-to-one) interaction	3.4	13.8
Other	3.3	6.0
Student response mode		
Verbal interaction with teacher	47.6	45.7
Listening to teacher	18.2	19.6
Silent reading	3.3	6.1
Oral reading	19.2	7.0
Reading and writing answers	8.2	19.0
Writing or drawing	2.4	0.1
Other (includes 1% off task time)	1.1	2.4
Student material		
Workbook	30.9	38.4
Textbook	32.7	16.2
No material	17.1	27.2
Chalkboard, chart	11.9	10.0
Paper and pencil	3.3	3.7
Dictionary	2.2	1.4
Tradebook	1.0	1.7
Other	1.0	1.4

Table 9 (cont'd)

	Grade	
	3	4
Student task		
Reading	14.8	15.8
Following teacher directions	19.4	19.8
Word recognition and word attack	15.8	8.5
Word and sentence level comprehension		
Word meaning	14.4	24.9
Recalling or locating facts and details	11.6	10.0
Interpreting sentences	3.7	2.7
Text level comprehension		
Interpreting paragraphs or stories	7.8	4.8
Sequencing, information	2.3	0.3
Summarizing or finding main ideas	1.2	0.8
Learning study skills or using reference materials	3.0	4.7
Learning punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure, or grammar	1.1	0.7
Analyzing paragraph or poem structure or writing reports, stories or poems	0.4	0.5
Analyzing literary forms, devices, or author's purpose	0.6	1.8
Other (unclassifiable worksheet exercises)	4.0	4.9

Table 10

Percent Time of Reading Lesson Activities, Materials, and Tasks of Students Working Outside Teacher-Instructed Group

	Group	
	3	4
Student response mode		
Writing	54.2	39.4
Silent reading	14.9	26.8
Oral reading	2.6	0.0
Listening to tapes	2.3	0.0
Painting or drawing	0.4	10.2
Other	25.7	23.6
Materials		
Workbook or ditto	50.7	41.5
Textbook	10.0	10.0
Tradebook	9.8	16.4
Dictionary	1.5	0.0
Paper and pencil	2.3	13.6
Chalk, games, audio tape	8.4	1.0
No materials	17.3	17.1
Student tasks		
Reading	20.5	25.6
Word recognition or word attack	10.5	7.4
Word and sentence level comprehension		
Word meaning	19.0	7.1
Recalling or locating fact and details	7.7	8.1
Interpreting sentences	1.2	0.5
Text level comprehension		
Interpreting paragraphs or stories	5.2	6.0
Sequencing, summarizing, or finding main idea	2.3	3.6
Study skills or using references	3.7	1.2
Punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure, grammar	3.0	0.0
Literary forms and devices or author's purpose	0.0	0.0
Writing reports, stories, poems	1.6	4.9
Other work (math, spelling, drawing)	5.3	15.8
Off task	17.7	17.1

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Teachers' beliefs about the importance of word recognition activities.

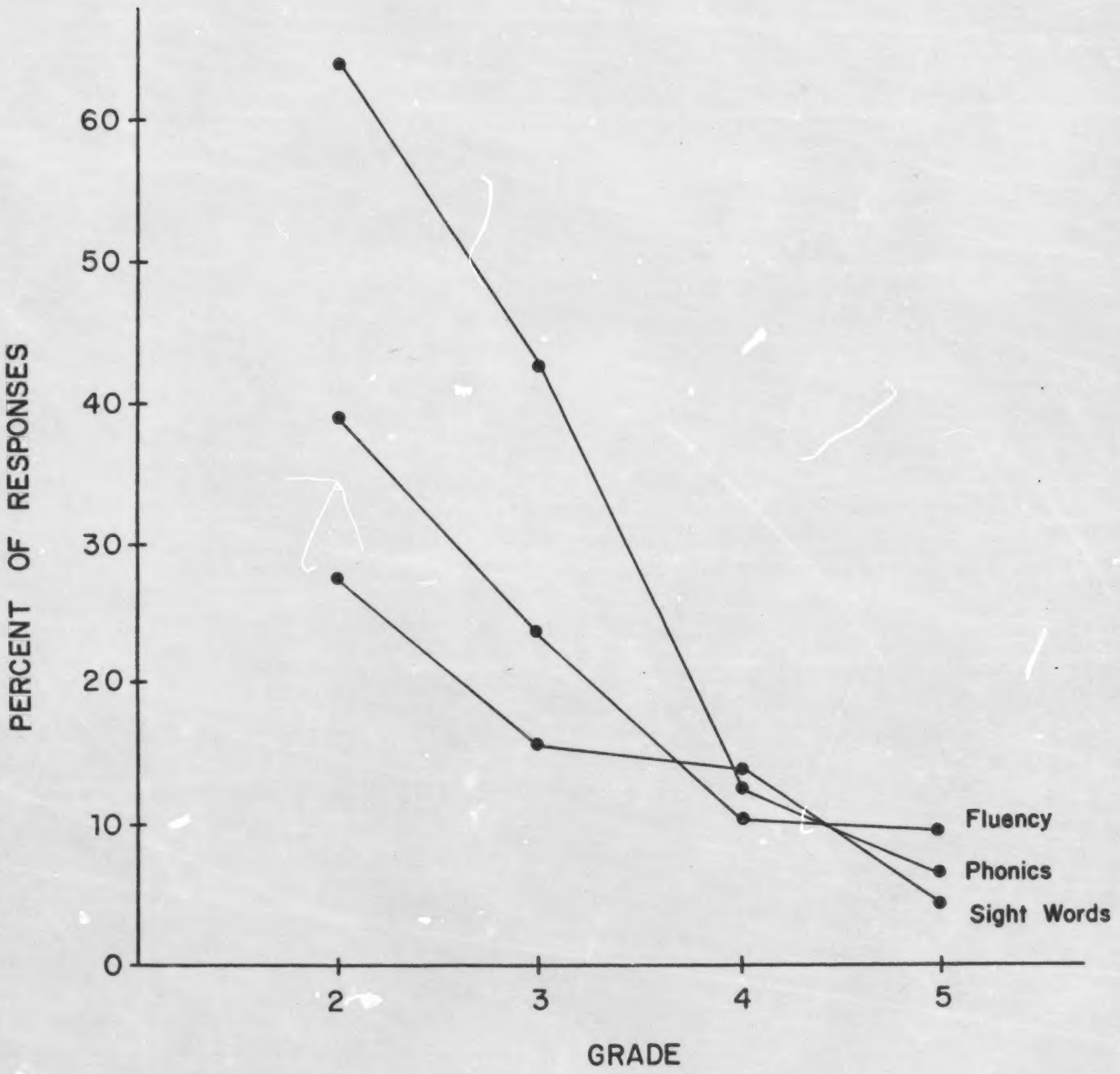
Figure 2. Teachers' beliefs about the importance of word and sentence level comprehension activities.

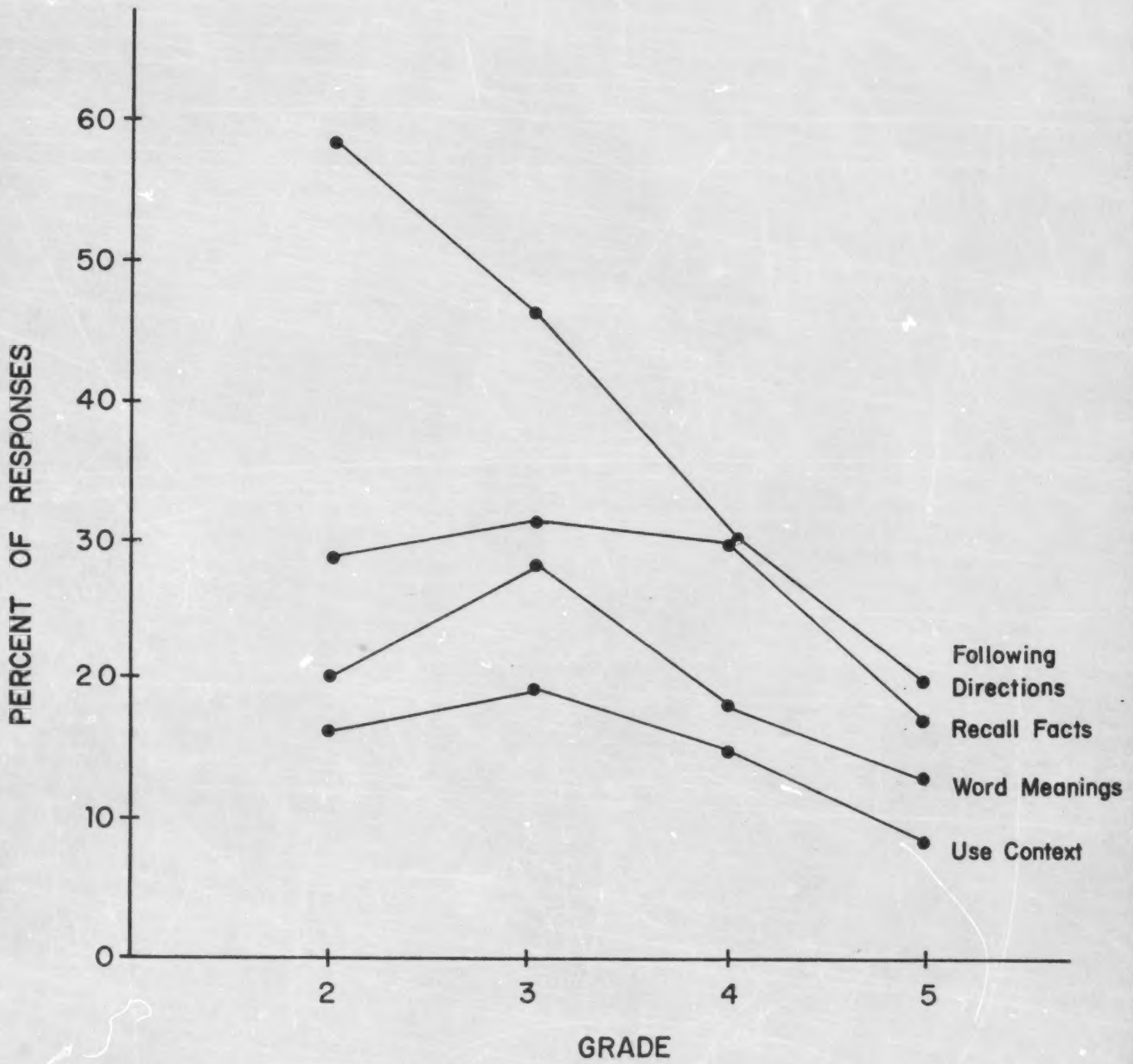
Figure 3. Teachers' beliefs about the importance of text level comprehension activities.

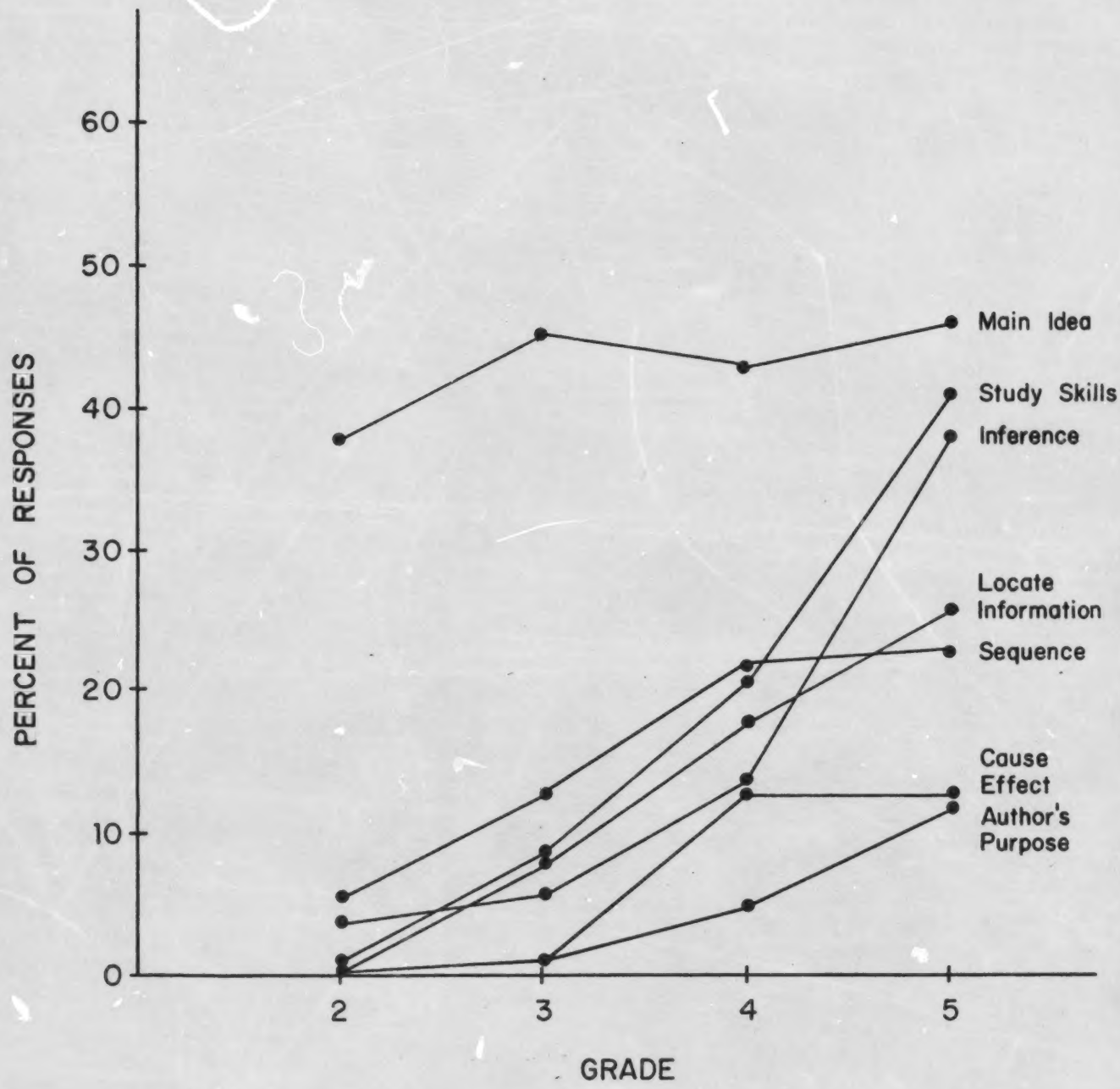
Figure 4. Teachers' perceptions about their students' reading competencies.

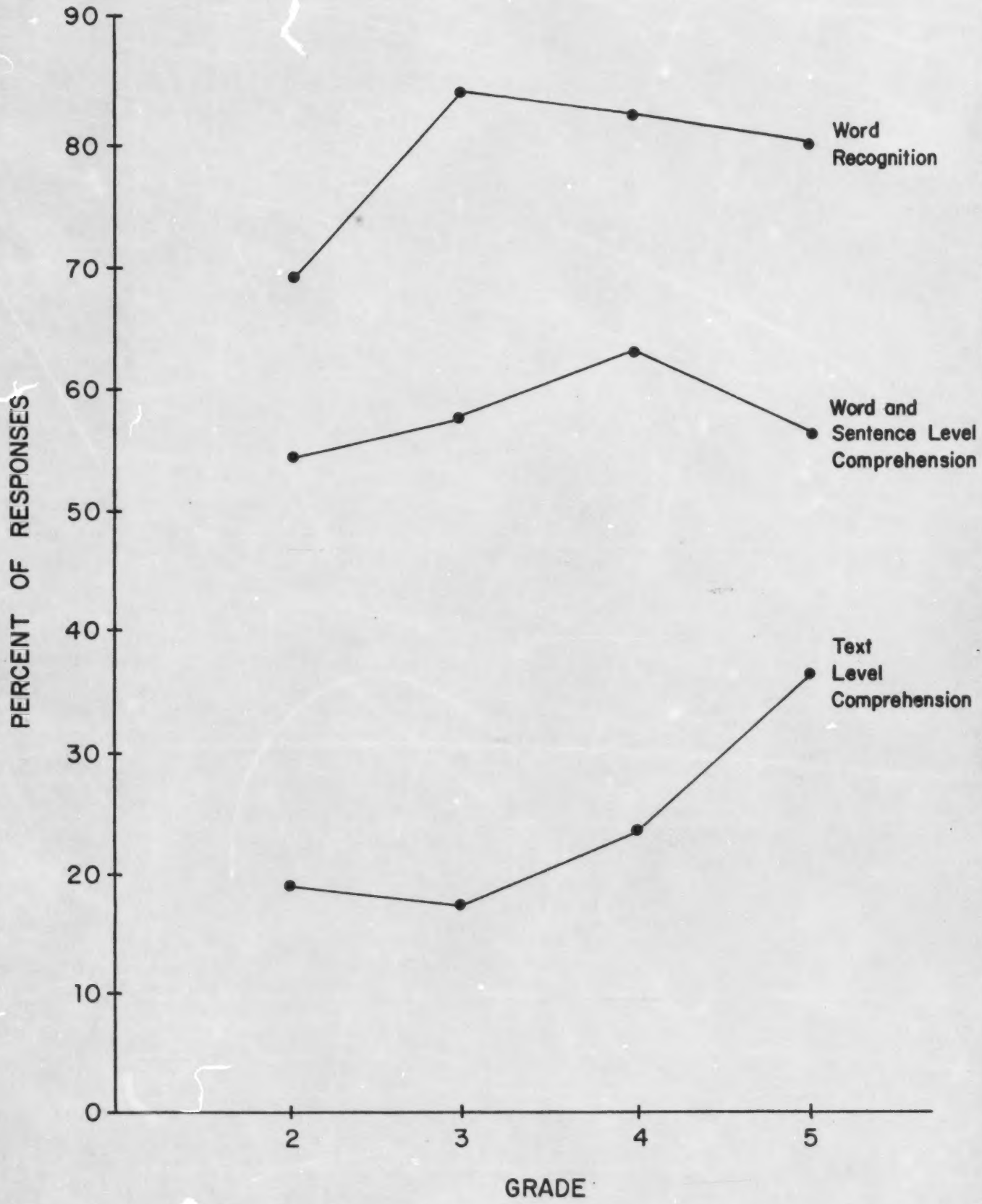
Figure 5. Teachers' reported instructional emphases of reading activities as a function of grade.

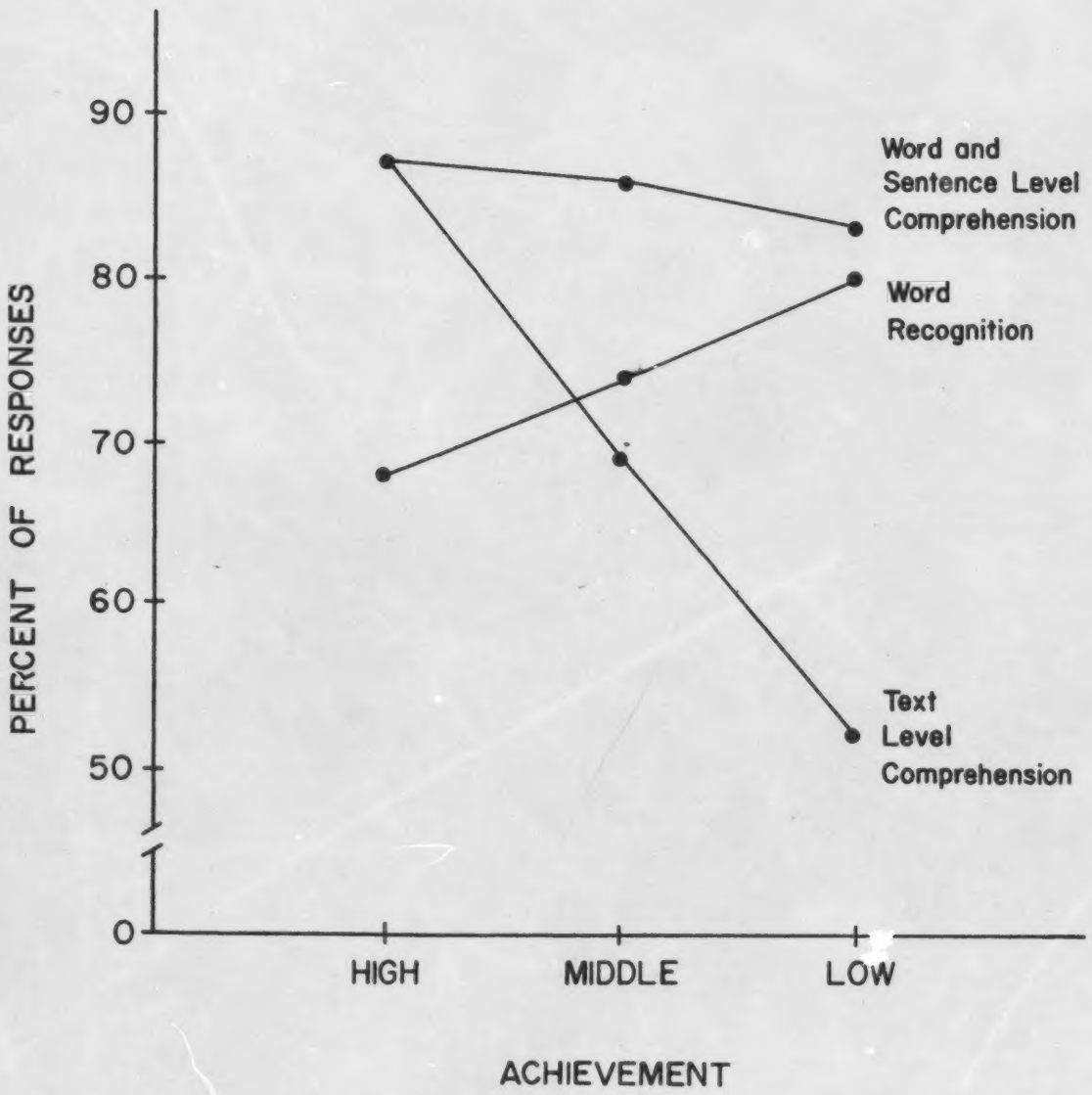
Figure 6. Teachers' reported instructional emphases of reading activities as a function of student reading ability.

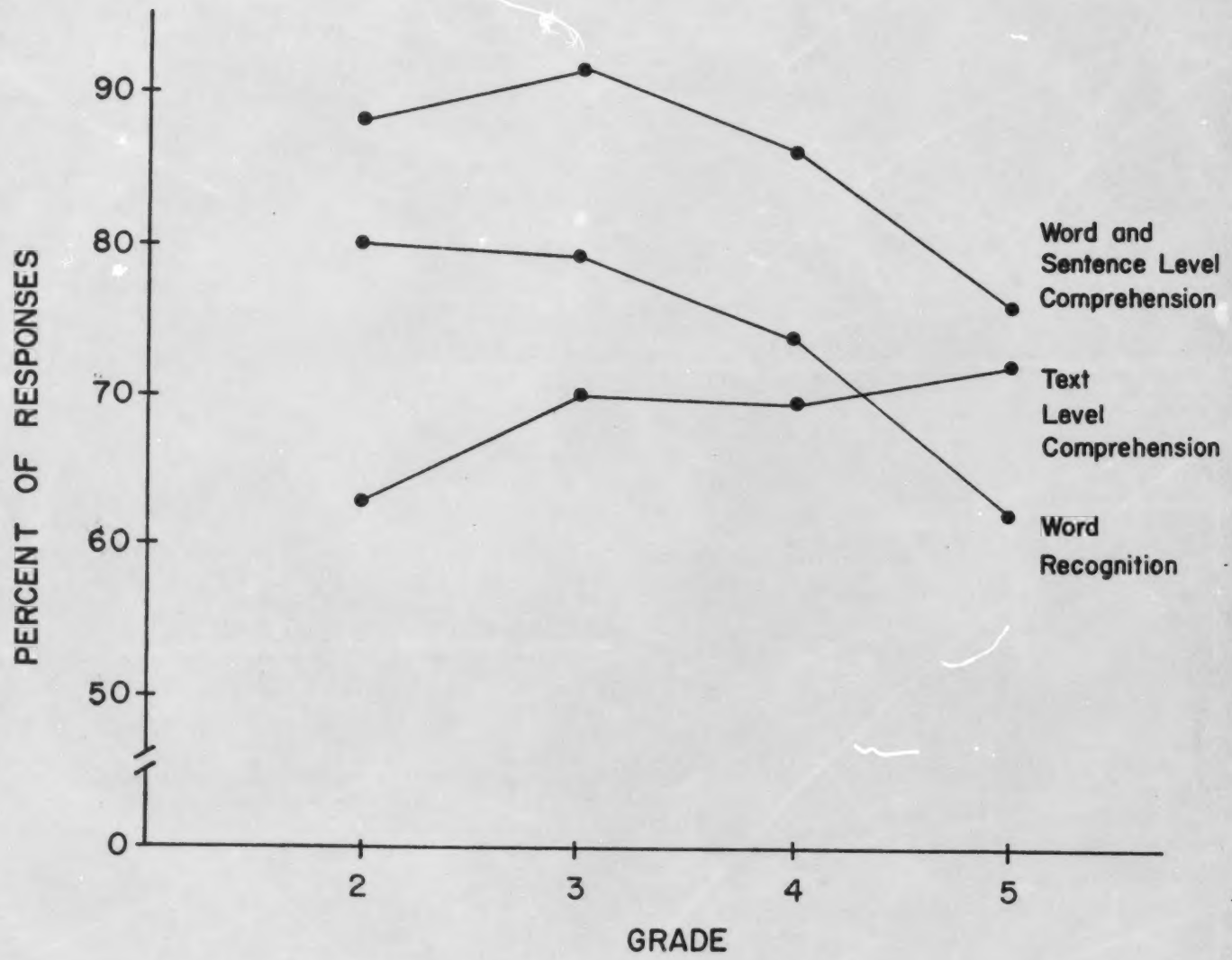

PERCENT OF RESPONSES
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
2
3
4
5
GRADE
Fluency
Phonics
Sight Words


PERCENT OF RESPONSES
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
2
3
4
5
GRADE
Following Directions
Recall Facts
Word Meanings
Use Context


PERCENT OF RESPONSES
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
2
3
4
5
GRADE
Main Idea
Study Skills
Inference
Locate Information
Sequence
Cause Effect
Author's Purpose


90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
PERCENT OF RESPONSES
2
3
4
5
GRADE
Word Recognition
Word and Sentence Level Comprehension
Text Level Comprehension


90
80
70
60
50
0
PERCENT OF RESPONSES
Word and
Sentence Level
Comprehension
Word
Recognition
Text
Level
Comprehension
HIGH
MIDDLE
LOW
ACHIEVEMENT


PERCENT OF RESPONSES
90
80
70
60
50
0
2
3
4
5
GRADE
Word and Sentence Level Comprehension
Text Level Comprehension
Word Recognition

APPENDIX

School_____ Your Room Number_____

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF READING

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

We are interested in your views about the nature of children's reading in grades two through five, particularly in the ways reading competency increases from grade to grade. Because we feel that this kind of information is best obtained from teachers working in elementary school classrooms, we have prepared this questionnaire. We appreciate your taking the time to respond to it and we hope to benefit from your experience. As you go through the questionnaire, please feel free to qualify your answers.

Before you do the main part of the questionnaire we would like you to think about what most of the students in the grade or grades you are now teaching have learned about reading. Below are descriptions of some reading activities. Please check those descriptions that identify what most of the students in your class could do with ease at the beginning of the school year.

* * * *

Personal Experience

1. Please circle the grade(s) you are now teaching:

   K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

2. Please circle the numbers that indicate how many years you have taught.

   1 2-5 6-10 11-20 over 20

3. Please circle when you obtained your teaching certificate.

   last year 2-5 years ago 6-10 years ago 11-20 years ago

   over 20 years ago

Classroom Information

4. The total number of children you are now teaching is _____.

5. Estimate the percentage of your students who come from homes in which one of the income earners is:

   _____% a professional, semi-professional, managerial, or self-employed person
   _____% a clerical worker or other skilled worker
   _____% an unskilled worker
   _____% on welfare
   _____% other (please specify)_____

6. Please check the statement that best describes the organization for reading instruction in your classroom:

   _____a) I teach reading to all the children in my regular class and none of the children receives reading instruction from another teacher.

   _____b) I teach reading to all the children in my regular class but a few children get supplementary instruction from another teacher.

   _____c) I teach reading to most of the children in my regular class but a few children go to someone else for all of their reading instruction.

   _____d) I teach reading to children who come from two or more classrooms (cross grouping).

   _____e) None of the above statements describes how I organize my class for reading instruction. (Please describe what you do:)

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

(15,16)

(17)

(18)

(19,20)

(21,22)

(23,24)

(25,26)

(27,28)

(29,30)

(31,32)

7.0. Are the children in your classroom grouped for reading instruction?

_____Yes _____No

If you answered no please check the statement which describes how you teach reading, then go to Question 8.

_____a) When I teach reading all of the children are usually reading the same story.

_____b) When I teach reading each child in the class is usually reading a different story.

_____c) I do something else. (Please specify what you do.)

_____

_____

If you answered yes, please continue.

7.1. How many reading groups do you teach? _____

7.2. Do you organize your groups by ability? _____Yes _____No

If you answered yes to 7.2, list the ability level of each group (1 = high, etc.), indicate the number of children in each group, and write the approximate grade level of the reading materials used for each group.

Ability level of Group	Number of Children	Approximate grade level of materials

7.3. Are there any kinds of reading tasks that you teach to the whole class (instead of to groups)?

_____Yes _____No (If yes, please specify.)_____

_____

7.4. Are there any kinds of tasks that you teach to children individually (instead of to groups)?

_____Yes _____No (If yes, please specify.)_____

_____

OFFICE USE ONLY

(33)

(34,35)

(36)

(37)

(38-42)

(43-47)

(48-52)

(53-57)

(58-62)

(63,64)

(65,66)

OFFICE USE ONLY	

8. Please estimate the percentage of reading instruction time spent by your students.

_____% doing reading work-sheet exercises	(67,68)
_____% reading stories silently	(69,70)
_____% reading aloud in reading groups (round robin reading)	(71,72)
_____% reading aloud to a teacher (one to one)	(73,74)
_____% doing other reading-related activities (listening to tapes, etc.)	(75,76)

9. Suppose you were teaching students who were all reading at one grade level higher than the students in your present class. Would you:

_____a) use more whole class instruction
_____b) use more small group instruction
_____c) use more individualized instruction
_____d) keep the instructional organization about the same
_____e) do something else

(77)

10. Suppose you were teaching students who were all reading at one grade level lower than the students in your present class. Would you:

_____a) use more whole class instruction
_____b) use more small group instruction
_____c) use more individualized instruction
_____d) keep the instructional organization about the same
_____e) do something else

(78)

11. In selecting materials and/or deciding how to organize your students into reading groups, what information do you find helpful? Check those sources you find helpful. Double check the one(s) you find most helpful.

_____ scores on standardized reading tests	(79,80)
_____ readers and workbooks completed in previous grades	(81,82)
_____ current progress in workbooks	(83,84)
_____ oral reading fluency	(85,86)
_____ answers to oral comprehension questions	(87,88)
_____ children's expressed reading interests	(89,90)
_____ children's oral language competency	(91,92)
_____ other (please specify)_____	(93,94)

The Published Materials

12. Do curriculum programs (basal readers) play an important part in your reading instruction? _____Yes _____No

If you answered no, please describe the materials you use. Then go to question 13.

_____

_____

_____

If you answered yes and you group children for instruction, fill out this chart to show the reading materials you are now using with each reading group. List your groups by number (1 = highest ability etc.). Then, for each group indicate the name of the publisher and the title of the reader in current use. Finally check the columns which indicate frequency of use of readers, workbooks, and teacher guides. Check if supplementary materials are used.

Group (1,2..)	Publisher (name)	Reader (title)	Readers used				Workbooks used				Teacher guide used				Supplementary materials used	
			Daily	1-3 times a week	Less than once a week	Not used daily	Daily	1-3 times a week	Less than once a week	Not used	Daily	1-3 times a week	Less than once a week	Not used	Publisher made	Teacher made

If you use teacher guides check whether you use them:

_____a) as prescribed
_____b) modified slightly
_____c) modified substantially

OFFICE USE ONLY

(95)

(96,97)

(98-104)

(105-111)

(112-118)

(119-125)

(126-132)

(133)

Your Reading Activities

13. What reading activities are you emphasizing this semester? Consider high, middle, and low reading ability children separately. Place an X in front of those activities you emphasize for each ability level.

ABILITY LEVEL			READING ACTIVITY	*OFFICE USE ONLY*
HIGH	MIDDLE	LOW		
			grasp the main ideas of most written passages	(134-136)
			locate information in texts and other books	(137-139)
			draw appropriate inferences or conclusions from paragraphs and stories	(140-142)
			read fluently (orally)	(143-145)
			recall important facts and details from paragraphs and stories	(146-148)
			recognize author's purpose	(149-151)
			recognize by sight most words encountered in classroom reading materials	(152-154)
			sequence and summarize information from paragraphs and stories	(155-157)
			understand and follow directions	(158-160)
			understand cause and effect relationships in text materials	(161-163)
			use context to figure out new words	(164-166)
			understand the meanings of most words encountered in classroom reading materials	(167-169)
			use phonetic skills or structural analysis to decode most unfamiliar words	(170-172)
			use study skills (dictionaries, charts, etc.) effectively	(173-175)

14. Please list the instructional activities you have emphasized during this entire school year (but only if they differ from those you checked on page 6). Again, consider high, middle and low ability readers separately.

High ability_____

_____

Middle ability_____

_____

Low ability_____

_____

15. We're trying to get an idea of how children's reading abilities change as they progress through the elementary grades. Please select and mark what you think are the three most important reading activities for each grade from this list. Use 1 = most important, 2 = next most important, 3 = third most important.

GRADE 2	3	4	5	READING ACTIVITY	OFFICE USE ONLY
				grasp the main ideas of most written passages	(176,177)
				locate information in texts and other books	(178,179)
				draw appropriate inferences or conclusions from paragraphs and stories	(180,181)
				read fluently (orally)	(182-185)
				recall important facts and details from paragraphs and stories	(186-189)
				recognize author's purpose	(190-193)
				recognize by sight most words encountered in classroom reading materials	(194-197)
				sequence and summarize information from paragraphs and stories	(198-201)
				understand and follow directions	(202-205)
				understand cause and effect relationships in text materials	(206-209)
				use context to figure out new words	(210-213)
				understand the meanings of most words encountered in classroom reading materials	(214-217)
				use phonetic skills or structural analysis to decode most unfamiliar words	(218-221)
				use study skills (dictionaries, charts, etc.) effectively	(222-225)
					(226-229)
					(230-233)

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM AND CODE

1. Observation Number

Each event observed is given a number. A change in student or teaching activity implies a new event, and therefore a new observation number.

T after the number indicates the presence of a teacher.

A after the number indicates the presence of an aide or student.

O after the number indicates the presence of some other adult teacher.

2. Time

Since the form is intended to be a means of describing what is occurring in reading periods in regular classrooms, observation typically begins at the start of a reading period. Each event observed is given a number and the beginning time (in hours and minutes) of each event is written down. Thus the duration of each event is recorded. The first event observed is usually initiated by the teacher, either with an individual student, a group of students or with the entire class. The observer watches the teacher (or teacher aide) recording each significant change in teacher behavior as well as that of the student or students the teacher is working with. A new observation number is accompanied by a new time, except when the observer is making a sweep of the entire class.

In those classrooms in which the teacher works with individual children or groups of children and assigns activities to the other children to be done independently the observer will interrupt observing the teacher-student interactions every ten minutes for a sweep of the entire classroom. The activities of all children are recorded during a sweep. (If the teacher is working with the entire classroom at once, a sweep will not be necessary.)

The sweep is indicated by writing S in the observation column and the time at the beginning of the sweep. This will show that at a given time some of the children in the classroom are working independently on the

activities described in the sweep observations. During the sweep, children engaged in the same activity will be counted together. The observer counts the number of children engaged in each kind of activity, and then describes each activity.

A new time will indicate that the sweep is finished and that the observer is back to watching teacher-student interactions.

Example 1:

	(1) Obs #	(2) Time
	1T	10:00
	2T	10:03
	3T	10:07
sweep	S	10:10
sweep	S	"
sweep	S	"
sweep	S	"
	4T	10:12

3. Teacher Activity

How the teacher, teacher-aide or student teacher is working with the students is recorded in this column. These are the rules for these classifications:

P(preparation)

PG (procedural general): general classroom organizational instructions, for example,"Open your books," or "The green group moves to the library table."

PR (routine preparation): teacher reads or recites directions from texts or workbooks.

PP (paraphrase preparation): teacher rewords text or workbook directions by paraphrasing or inserting additional information.

PE (explanatory preparation): teacher gives directions and follows them up with examples of how the task is to be carried out, or describes how the task is similar to or related to other tasks children have done before.

I(instruction, lecture)

IR (reviews work): teaching activity is a review of previous instruction and/or other work.

II (informs by classifying, giving consequence, defining, comparing and contrasting, naming or explaining): teaching activities can be rule giving, classifying, describing causal or sequential relationships, drawing conclusions from a set of conditions, comparing two or more actions, processes, or objects or labeling something with a new term. This is formal instruction.

QA (questions-answers): the teacher or the children ask or answer questions about the topic or task.

RR (round robin): the teacher asks different children in a group or in the entire classroom to read outloud or to answer questions about what has been read.

O (other): the teacher is doing none of the above, but, for example, is attending to the unacceptable behavior of a child or some children, waiting for students to complete their work, discussing a topic that is not related to the reading lesson.

X The teacher is not present with the students being observed.

Example 2:

(1) Obs #	(2) Time	(3) Teaching Activity
1T	10:00	PR
2T	10:03	II
3T	10:07	QA
S	10:10	X
S	"	X
S	"	X
S	"	X
4T	10:12	QA

sweep

4. Group/Size

If the class has been divided into groups, each group is designated by a letter. The first group observed is identified as Group A, the subsequent groups as Groups B, C, etc. (The letters do not indicate top, middle and bottom groups but rather the order in which the groups are observed.) Use group letter designations only for groups working with the teacher.

An individual child working with the teacher is indicated by writing the letter I. The designation EC is used when the entire class is doing the same thing at the same time, either under the direction of the teacher or while working independently.

Do not use a group letter designation while observing the teacher working with individual children. Do not use a group letter designation while observing children during the sweep.

The number of students in each group is written either after the group letter or as the sole entry in this column. For example, a group of seven students working with the teacher would be written A/7. The same group of students observed working independently would be written 7. During a sweep the observer will usually simply count the number of students engaged in a given activity and then describe that activity.

Example 3:

(1) Obs #	(2) Time	(3) Teaching Activity	(4) Group/Size
1T	10:00	PR	A/7
2T	10:03	II	"
3T	10:07	QA	"
S	10:10	X	10
S	"	X	4
S	"	X	3
S	"	X	2
4T	10:12	QA	A/7
5	10:20	PR	EC

5. Student Activity

How the student is responding to the teacher or to the material being used is recorded in this column. Here are the rules for these classifications:

OE-Oral Extemporaneous: The students are answering or asking questions, discussing a topic, or making personal observations.

OR-Oral Reading of Text: The students are reading out loud from printed text, at the word, sentence, paragraph, or story level.

SR-Silent Reading: The students are reading silently from printed material.

RW-Reading and Writing: The students are reading text and then writing down answers to questions. (Workbook activities are typical of this classification.)

WF-Writing Freely: The students are writing reports, or stories, or any other task in which they must construct their own sentences or paragraphs.

LI-Listening: The students are listening to the teacher or to another student.

AV-Audio Visual: The students are using audio visual equipment as a part of their activity, for example, film strips and/or cassettes.

OT-Off Task: The students are doing none of the above, but are, for example, behaving badly, looking out of the window, or talking about or doing something that has nothing to do with the lesson or the assignment.

Example 4:

(1) Obs #	(2) Time	(3) Teaching Activity	(4) Group/Size	(5) Student Activity
1T	10:00	PR	A/7	LI
2T	10:03	II	"	OE
3T	10:07	QA	"	RW
S	10:10	X	10	SR
S	"	X	4	WF
S	"	X	3	RW
S	"	X	2	OT
4T	10:12	QA	A/7	OE

6. Student or Teacher Material

The kind of student or teacher material used is described in this column. Here are the definitions of these categories:

TX-Textbook: A book whose intention is to present, in print, a sequence of lessons about a given topic. Textbooks usually contain student activities (either in the book itself or in the accompanying teacher's guide).

TR-Tradebook: A book that does not have a sequence of lessons about a given topic as its primary characteristic. Examples of tradebooks are storybooks and informational books.

DR-Dictionary, Reference Book, Magazine or Newspaper: (Such reading materials are usually used to supplement regular work or as a basis for report writing.)

WB-Workbook and/or Dittosheets: Workbooks, worksheets, teacher-made dittos, or sheets made from commercially available dittos.

TWS-Textbook or Comprehension Cards with Worksheet or answer cards: for example, the SRA Reading Lab.

CH-Chalkboard or Chart: The students or teacher are writing on a chalkboard, or pointing to or reading already written material on a chalkboard or display chart.

EG-Educational Games: Teacher-made or commercial games that are used to teach or reinforce basic skills.

PP-Paper and Pencil: The students are writing spelling words, or are writing reports or compositions. (Paper and pencil tasks which involve writing short answers to questions appearing in textbooks, workbooks, or comprehension cards should be classified as WB or TWS.

O-Other: Anything that does not fit into the above classifications should be indicated by an O in this column, an arrow should be drawn to column 9 and the material described there.

Example 5:

(1) Obs #	(2) Time	(3) Teaching Activity	(4) Group/Size	(5) Student Activity	(6) Material	(7) Title and Page Number
1T	10:00	PR	A/7	L	CH	———
2T	10:03	II	"	OE	WB	H-M, *Rainbows*, p.7
3T	10:07	QA	"	RW	WB	"
S	10:10	X	10	SR	TR	*Misc. Library Books*
S	"	X	4	WF	PP	———
S	"	X	3	RW	WB	H-M, *Serendipity*, p.71
S	"	X	2	OT	—	———
4T	10:12	QA	A/7	OE	WB	H-M, *Rainbows*, p.8

7. Title and Page Number

Write in the title and the page number of the book(s) the students are using.

8. The Task

What the task is can be determined by listening to the teacher and the students, examining the materials being used in the classroom, or by asking the teacher. (It should be noted that the title appearing on workbook pages does not always more accurately describe the task. It is best to observe and read what the students are doing and to then write down what the task is.) Here are descriptions of the Task categories:

FOD-Following Directions: This category is used only when the teacher is engaged in any of the Preparation Activities.

WOR-Word Recognition: Tasks in which the major effort is to teach whole word recognition. This may involve word drill on cards or on the chalkboard or easel, the use of pictures or of text context, or practice in reading words in sentences.

WOA-Word Attack: Tasks which emphasize phonics, patterns, structural analysis, stress, syllabication.

WOM-Word Meaning Understanding: Tasks which involve looking up words in the dictionary to ascertain their meaning, vocabulary exercises--including those involving similies, comparisons, opposites, synonyms, etc.

REL-Recalling or Locating Facts and Details: Oral or written tasks for which the students must remember or find specific information they have read in a passage.

ISN-Interpreting Sentences: Tasks in which the children answer questions, orally or in written form, about what single sentences mean.

IPS-Interpreting Paragraphs or Stories: Tasks in which the children answer questions or discuss the meaning of a paragraph or a story, orally or in written form.

SEQ-Sequencing Information: Tasks in which the students sequence sentences or information from text they are reading or have read.

SUM-Summarizing Information: Tasks in which the students summarize information or find the main idea of a passage they have read.

RPR-Reading Practice: Tasks in which the children read out loud or silently to improve accuracy, rate, fluency, or comprehension.

STS-Study Skills: Tasks in which the students are alphabetizing, learning to read tables of contents or indices, learning to use the dictionary (other than for word meaning), and reading charts.

PUN-Punctuation and Capitalization: Tasks in which the students are learning or practicing punctuation and capitalization rules.

SNS-Sentence Structure: Tasks in which students are analyzing the structure or the grammar of sentences.

PRS-Paragraph or Poem Structure: Tasks in which students are analyzing the organization of paragraphs or poems, including outlining.

USR-Using Reference Materials: Tasks in which the students are gathering information from books, magazines, etc. to write a report.

WRR-Writing Reports, Stories, Poems: The students are writing expository or narrative compositions.

LIS-Literary Study: Tasks in which the students learn about literary forms, devices, etc., or discuss authors.

OTH-Other: Tasks that none of the above classifications describe.

9. Description

A succinct description of the event is written out. More details are added if the observer believes that the coding is inadequate.

(See final example on the next page.)

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION FORM

School _____ Page _____

Teacher _____ Grade _____ Date _____ Time In _____ Time Out _____ Observer _____

(1) Obs #	(2) Time	(3) Teaching Activity	(4) Group/Size	(5) Student Activity	(6) Material	(7) Title and Page Number	(8) The Task	(9) Description

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CODE

1. Observation Number and Teaching Personnel
Each teacher or student event is given a number and teaching personnel involved is designated by following the number with:

T a classroom teacher
A an aide or student teacher
O some other adult

2. Time
The beginning of each event, in hours and minutes, is written down.

3. Teacher Activity

Preparation

PG Procedural
PR (Routine Preparation)--reading or reciting directions from texts or workbooks
PP (Paraphrase Preparation)--rewording text or workbook directions or adding information
PE (Explanatory Preparation)--giving directions and following up with examples

Instruction

IR (Reviews Work)--reviewing other work
II (Informs)--classifying, explaining, defining, comparing and contrasting. That is, formal teaching.
QA (Questions-Answers)--asking questions, listening to answers
RR (Round Robin)--calling on different children to read or answer questions
O (Other)--none of the above
X (Not Present or working with individuals)

4. Group/Size

A First group observed with teacher
B Second group observed with teacher
C Third group observed with teacher
I An individual child observed with teacher
EC Entire class observed with teacher
(Do not use a group letter if teacher is not present with individual or group.) Write down the size of group or class being observed.

5. Student Activity

OE Oral Extemporaneous
OR Oral Reading
SR Silent Reading
RW Reading and Writing
WF Writing Freely
LI Listening
AV Audio-Visual
OT Off Task

6. Student or Teacher Material

TX Textbook
TR Tradebook
DR Dictionary, etc.
WB Workbook and/or Ditto Sheets
TWS Textbook (or Comprehension Cards) with Worksheet
CH Chalkboard or Chart
EG Educational Game
PP Paper and Pencil
O Other

7. Title and Page Number

8. Task

FOD Following Direction
WOR Word Recognition
WOA Work Attack
WOM Word Meaning Understanding
REL Recalling or locating facts and details
ISN Interpreting sentences
IPS Interpreting paragraphs or stories
SEQ Sequencing information
SUM Summarizing, finding main idea
RPR Reading practice
STS Study Skills
PUN Punctuation and capitalization
SNS Sentence Structure, Grammar
PRS Paragraph or poem structure
USR Using reference materials
WRR Writing reports, stories, poems
LIS Literary forms, devices; authors
OTH Other